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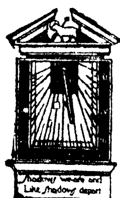
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NOTES OF TRAVEL

BY

G. LOWES DICKINSON

AUTHOR OF "A MODERN SYMPOSIUM,"
"JUSTICE AND LIBERTY," ETC.



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PREFACE

THE articles included in this book have already appeared, those from the East in the *Manchester Guardian*, those from America in the *English Review*. In reprinting them, I have chosen a title which may serve also as an apology. What I offer is not Reality; but appearances to me. From such appearances perhaps, in time, Reality may be constructed. I claim only to make my contribution. I do so because the new contact between East and West is perhaps the most important fact of our age; and the problems of action and thought which it creates can only be solved as each civilisation tries to understand the others, and, by so doing, better to understand itself. These articles represent at any rate a good will to understand; and they may, I hope, for that reason throw one gleam of light on the darkness.

For the opportunity of travelling in the East I am indebted to the munificence of Mr. Albert Kahn of Paris, who has founded what are known in this country

as the Albert Kahn Travelling Fellowships.[1] The existence of this endowment is perhaps not as widely known as it should be. And if this volume should be the occasion of leading others to take advantage of the founder's generosity it will not have been written in vain.

I have hesitated long before deciding to republish the letters on America. They were written in 1909, before the election of President Wilson, and all that led up to and is implied in that event. It was not, however, the fact that, so far, they are out of date, that caused me to hesitate. For they deal only incidentally with current politics, and whatever value they may have is as a commentary on phases of American civilisation which are of more than transitory significance. Much has happened in the United States during the last few years which is of great interest and importance. The conflict between democracy and plutocracy has become more conscious and more acute; there have been important developments in the labour movement; and capital has been so "harassed" by legislation that it may, for the moment, seem odd to capitalists to find America called "the paradise of Plutocracy." No doubt the American public has awakened to its situation

[1] These Fellowships, each of the value of £660, were established to enable the persons appointed to them to travel round the world. The Trust is administered at the University of London, and full information regarding it can be obtained from the Principal, Sir Henry Miers, F.R.S., who is Honorary Secretary to the Trustees.

since 1909. But such awakenings take a long time to transform the character of a civilisation; and all that has occurred serves only to confirm the contention in the text that in the new world the same situation is arising that confronts the old one.

What made me hesitate was something more important than the date at which the letters were written. There is in them a note of exasperation which I would have wished to remove if I could. But I could not, without a complete rewriting, by which, even if it were possible to me, more would have been lost than gained. It is this note of exasperation which has induced me hitherto to keep the letters back, in spite of requests to the contrary from American friends and publishers. But the opportunity of adding them as a pendant to letters from the East, where they fall naturally into their place as a complement and a contrast, has finally overcome my scruples; the more so, as much that is said of America is as typical of all the West, as it is foreign to all the East. That this Western civilisation, against which I have so much to say, is nevertheless the civilisation in which I would choose to live, in which I believe, nd about which all my hopes centre, I have endeavoured to make clear in the concluding essay. And my readers, I hope, if any of them persevere to the end, will feel that they have been listening, after all, to the voice of a friend, even if the friend be of that disagreeable kind called "candid."

CONTENTS

PART I

INDIA

PART II

CHINA

PART III

JAPAN

PART IV

AMERICA

PART I

INDIA

I

IN THE RED SEA

"BUT why do you do it ?" said the Frenchman. From the saloon above came a sound of singing, and I recognised a well-known hymn. The sun was blazing on a foam-flecked sea; a range of islands lifted red rocks into the glare; the wind blew fresh; and, from above,

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Male voices were singing; voices whose owners, beyond a doubt, had no idea of clinging to anything. Female voices, too, of clingers, perhaps, but hardly to a cross. "Why do you do it?"—I began to explain. "For the same reason that we play deck-quoits and shuffle-board; for the same reason that we dress for dinner. It's the system." "The system?" "Yes. What I call Anglicanism. It's a form of idealism. It consists in doing the proper thing." "But why should the proper thing be done?" "That question ought not to be asked. Anglicanism is an idealistic creed. It is anti-utilitarian and anti-rational. It does not ask questions; it has faith. The proper thing is the proper

thing, and because it is the proper thing it is done." "At least," he said, "you do not pretend that this is religion?" "No. It has nothing to do with religion. But neither is it, as you too simply suppose, hypocrisy. Hypocrisy implies that you know what religion is, and counterfeit it. But these people do not know, and they are not counterfeiting. When they go to church they are not thinking of religion. They are thinking of the social system. The officers and civilians singing up there first learned to sing in the village church. They walked to the church from the great house; the great house stood in its park; the park was enclosed by the estate; and the estate was surrounded by other estates. The service in the village church stood for all that. And the service in the saloon stands for it still. At bottom, what that hymn means is not that these men are Christians, but that they are carrying England to India, to Burma, to China." "It is a funny thing," the Frenchman mused, "to carry to 300 million Hindus and Mahometans, and 400 million Confucians, Buddhists, and devil-worshippers. What do they do with it when they get there?" "They plant it down in little oases all over the country, and live in it. It is the shell that protects them in those oceans of impropriety. And from that shell they govern the world." "But how can they govern what they can't even see?" "They govern all the better. If once they could see, they would be lost. Doubt would enter in. And it is the

virtue of the Englishman that he never doubts. That is what the system does for him."

At this moment a voice was borne down the breeze. It was that of my travelling companion, and it appeared, as he approached, that he was discoursing to the captain on the merits of Dostoievsky's novels. He is no respecter of persons; he imposes his own conversation; and the captain, though obviously puzzled, was polite. "Russians may be like that," he was remarking as he passed, "but Englishmen aren't." "No," said my friend, "but don't you wish they were?" "I do *not*," said the captain with conviction. I looked at the Frenchman. "There," I said, "behold the system." "But your friend?" "Ah, but he, like myself, is a pariah. Have you not observed? They are quite polite. They have even a kind of respect—such as our public school boys have—for anyone who is queer, if only he is queer enough. But we don't "belong," and they know it. We are outside the system. At bottom we are dangerous, like foreigners. And they don't quite approve of our being let loose in India." "Besides, you talk to the Indians." "Yes, we talk to the Indians." "And that is contrary to the system?" "Yes, on board the boat; it's all very well while you're still in England." "A strange system—to perpetuate between rulers and ruled an impassable gulf!" "Yes. But, as Mr. Podsnap remarked, 'so it is.'"

We had penetrated to the bows of the ship and hung

looking over. Suddenly, just under the surf, there was an emerald gleam; another; then a leap and a dive; a leap and a dive again. A pair of porpoises were playing round the bows with the ease, the spontaneity, the beauty of perfect and happy life. As we watched them the same mood grew in us till it forced expression. And "Oh," I said, "the ship's a prison!" "No," said the Frenchman, "it's the system."

II

AJANTA

A DUSTY road running through an avenue across the great plateau of the Deccan; scanty crops of maize and cotton; here and there low hills, their reddish soil sparsely clothed with trees; to the north, a receding line of mountains; elsewhere infinite space and blazing light. Our "tonga," its pair of wheels and its white awning rolling and jolting behind two good horses, passes long lines of bullock-carts. Indians, walking beside them with their inimitable gait, make exquisite gestures of abjection to the clumsy white Sahibs huddled uncomfortably on the back seat. Their robes of vivid colour, always harmoniously blent, leave bare the slender brown legs and often the breast and back. Children stark naked ride on their mothers' hips or their fathers' shoulder. Now and again the oxen are unyoked at a dribble of water, and a party rests and eats in the shade. Otherwise it is one long march with bare feet over the burning soil.

We are approaching a market. The mud walls of a village appear. And outside, by a stream shrunk now

into muddy pools, shimmers and wimmers a many-coloured crowd, buzzing among their waggons and awnings and improvised stalls. We ford the shallow stream, where women are washing clothes, cleaning their teeth, and drinking from the same water, and pass among the bags of corn, the sugar-cane, and sweetmeats, saluted gravely but unsolicited.

Then on again for hours, the road now solitary, till as day closes we reach Fardapur. A cluster of mud-walled compounds and beehive huts lies about a fortified enclosure, where the children sprawl and scream, and a Brahmin intones to silent auditors. Outside they are drawing water from the puddles of the stream. And gradually over the low hills and the stretches of yellow grass the after-glow spreads a transfiguring light. Out of a rosy flush the evening star begins to shine; the crickets cry; a fresh breeze blows; and another pitiless day drops into oblivion.

Next day, at dawn, we walk the four miles to the famous caves, guided by a boy who wears the Nizam's livery, and explains to us, in a language we do not know, but with perfect lucidity, that it is to him, and no one else, that backsheesh is due. He sings snatches of music as old and strange as the hills; picks us balls of cotton, and prickly pear; and once stops to point to the fresh tracks of a panther. We are in the winding gorge of a watercourse; and presently, at a turn, in a semicircle facing south, we see in the cliff the long line

of caves. As we enter the first an intolerable odour meets us, and a flight of bats explains the cause. Gradually our eyes accustom themselves to the light, and we become conscious of a square hall, the flat roof resting on squat pillars elaborately carved, fragments of painting on the walls and ceiling, narrow slits opening into dark cells, and opposite the entrance, set back in a shrine, a colossal Buddha, the light falling full on the solemn face, the upturned feet, the expository hands. This is a monastery, and most of the caves are on the same plan; but one or two are long halls, presumably for worship, with barrel-vaulted roofs, and at the end a great solid globe on a pedestal.

Of the art of these caves I will not speak. What little can be seen of the painting—and only ill-lighted fragments remain—is full of tenderness, refinement, and grace; no touch of drama; no hint of passion. The sculpture, stripped of its stucco surface, is rude but often impressive. But what impresses most is not the art but the religion of the place. In this terrible country, where the great forces of nature, drought and famine and pestilence, the intolerable sun, the intolerable rain, and the exuberance of life and death, have made of mankind a mere passive horde cowering before inscrutable Powers—here, more than anywhere, men were bound under a yoke of observance and ritual to the gods they had fashioned and the priests who interpreted their will. Then came the Deliverer to set

them free not *for* but *from* life, teaching them how to escape from that worst of all evils, rebirth again and again into a world of infinite suffering, unguided by any reason to any good end. "There is no god," said this strange master, "there is no soul; but there *is* life after death, life here in this hell, unless you will learn to deliver yourselves by annihilating desire." They listened; they built monasteries; they meditated; and now and again, here, perhaps, in these caves, one or other attained enlightenment. But the cloud of Hinduism, lifted for a moment, rolled back heavier than ever. The older gods were seated too firmly on their thrones. Shiva—creator, preserver, destroyer—expelled the Buddha. And that passive figure, sublime in its power of mind, sits for ever alone in the land of his birth, exiled from light, in a cloud of clinging bats.

But outside proceeds the great pageant of day and night, and the patient, beautiful people labour without hope, while universal nature, symbolised by Shiva's foot, presses heavily on their heads and forbids them the stature of man. Only the white man here, bustling, ungainly, aggressive, retains his freedom and acts rather than suffers. One understands at last the full meaning of the word "environment." Because of this sun, because of this soil, because of their vast numbers, these people are passive, religious, fatalistic. Because of our cold and rain in the north, our fresh springs

and summers, we are men of action, of science, of no reflection. The seed is the same, but according to the soil it brings forth differently. Here the patience, the beauty, the abjection before the Devilish-Divine; there the defiance, the cult of the proud self. And these things have met. To what result?

III

ULSTER IN INDIA

"ARE you a Home Ruler?" "Yes. Are you?" Instantly a torrent of protest. He was a Mahometan, eminent in law and politics; clever, fluent, forensic, with a passion for hearing himself talk, and addressing one always as if one were a public meeting. He approached his face close to mine, gradually backing me into the wall. And I realised the full meaning of Carlyle's dictum "to be a mere passive bucket to be pumped into can be agreeable to no human being."

It was not, naturally, the Irish question for its own sake that interested him. But he took it as a type of the Indian question. Here, too, he maintained, there is an Ulster, the Mahometan community. Here, too, there are Nationalists, the Hindus. Here, too, a "loyal" minority, protected by a beneficent and impartial Imperial Government. Here, too, a majority of "rebels" bent on throwing off that Government in order that they may oppress the minority. Here, too, an ideal of independence hypocritically masked under the phrase "self-government." "It is a law

of political science that where there are two minorities they should stand together against the majority. The Hindus want to get rid of you, as they want to get rid of us. And for that reason alone, if there were not a thousand others"—there were, he hinted, but, rhetorically, he "passed them over in silence"—"for that reason alone I am loyal to the British raj." It had never occurred to me to doubt it. But I questioned, when I got a moment's breathing space, whether really the Hindu community deliberately nourished this dark conspiracy. He had no doubt, so far as the leaders were concerned; and he mistrusted the "moderates" more than the extremists, because they were cleverer. He "multiplied examples"—it was his phrase. The movement for primary education, for example. It had nothing to do with education. It was a plot to teach the masses Hindi, in order that they might be swept into the anti-British, anti-Mahometan current. As to minor matters, no Hindu had ever voted for a Mahometan, no Hindu barrister ever sent a client to a Mahometan colleague. Whereas in all these matters, one was led to infer, Mahometans were conciliation and tolerance itself. I knew that the speaker himself had secured the election of Mahometans to all the seats in the Council. But I refrained from referring to the matter. Then there was caste. A Hindu will not eat with a Mahometan, and this was taken as a personal insult. I suggested that the English were equally boycotted;

but that we regarded the boycott as a religious obligation, not as a social stigma. But, like the Irish Ulstermen, he was not there to listen to argument. He rolled on like a river. None of us could escape. He detected the first signs of straying, and beckoned us back to the flock. " Mr. Audubon, this is important." " Mr. Coryat, you must listen to this." Coryat, at last, grew restive, and remarked rather tartly that no doubt there was friction between the two communities, but that the worst way to deal with it was by recrimination. He agreed ; with tears in his eyes he agreed. There was nothing he had not done, no advance he had not made, to endeavour to bridge the gulf. All in vain! Never were such obstinate fellows as these Hindus. And he proceeded once more to " multiply examples." As we said " Good-bye " in the small hours of the morning he pressed into our hands copies of his speeches and addresses. And we left him perorating on the steps of the hotel.

A painfully acquired mistrust of generalisation prevents me from saying that this is *the* Mahometan point of view. Indeed, I have reason to know that it is not. But it is *a* Mahometan point of view in one province. And it was endorsed, more soberly, by less rhetorical members of the community. Some twenty-five years ago, they say, Mahometans woke to the fact that they were dropping behind in the race for influence and power. They started a campaign of education and

organisation. At every point they found themselves thwarted; and always, behind the obstacle, lurked a Hindu. Lord Morley's reform of the Councils, intended to unite all sections, had had the opposite effect. Nothing but the separate electorates had saved Mahometans from political extinction. And precisely because they desired that extinction Hindus desired mixed electorates. The elections to the Councils have exasperated the antagonism between the two communities. And an enemy might accuse the Government of being actuated, in that reform, by the Machiavellian maxim "Divide et impera."

What the Hindus have to say to all this I have not had an opportunity of learning. But they too, I conceive, can "multiply examples" for their side. To a philosophic observer two reflections suggest themselves. One, that representative government can only work when there is real give and take between the contending parties. The other, that to most men, and most nations, religion means nothing more than antagonism to some other religion. Witness Ulster in Ireland; and witness, equally, Ulster in India.

IV

ANGLO-INDIA

FROM the gallery of the high hall we look down on the assembled society of the cantonment. The scene is commonplace enough; twaddle and tea, after tennis; "frivolling"—it is their word; women too empty-headed and men too tired to do anything else. This mill-round of work and exercise is maintained like a religion. The gymkhana represents the "compulsory games" of a public school. It is part of the "white man's burden." He plays, as he works, with a sense of responsibility. He is bored, but boredom is a duty, and there's nothing else to do.

The scene is commonplace. Yes! But this afternoon a band is playing. The music suits the occasion. It is soft, melodious, sentimental. It provokes a vague sensibility, and makes no appeal to the imagination. At least it should not, from its quality. But the power of music is incalculable. It has an essence independent of its forms. And by virtue of that essence its poorest manifestations can sink a shaft into the springs of life. So as I listen languidly the scene before me detaches

itself from actuality and floats away on the stream of art. It becomes a symbol; and around and beyond it, in some ideal space, other symbols arise and begin to move. I see the East as an infinite procession. Huge Bactrian camels balance their bobbing heads as they pad deliberately over the burning dust. Laden asses, cattle, and sheep and goats move on in troops. Black-bearded men, men with beard and hair dyed red, women pregnant or carrying babies on their hips, youths like the Indian Bacchus with long curling hair, children of all ages, old men magnificent and fierce, all the generations of Asia pass and pass on, seen like a frieze against a rock background, blazing with colour, rhythmical and fluent, marching menacingly down out of infinite space on to this little oasis of Englishmen. Then, suddenly, they are an ocean; and the Anglo-Indian world floats upon it like an Atlantic liner. It has its gymnasium, its swimming-bath, its card-rooms, its concert-room. It has its first and second class and steerage, well marked off. It dresses for dinner every night; it has an Anglican service on Sunday; it flirts mildly; it is bored; but above all it is safe. It has water-tight compartments. It is "unsinkable." The band is playing; and when the crash comes it will not stop. No; it will play this music, this, which is in my ears. Is it Gounod's "Faust" or an Anglican hymn? No matter! It is the same thing, sentimental, and not imaginative. And sentimentally,

not imaginatively, the Englishman will die. He will not face the event, but he will stand up to it. He will realise nothing, but he will shrink from nothing. Of all the stories about the loss of the *Titanic* the best and most characteristic is that of the group of men who sat conversing in the second-class smoking-room, till one of them said, "Now she's going down. Let's go and sit in the first-class saloon." And they did. How touching! How sublime! How English! The *Titanic* sinks. With a roar the machinery crashes from stem to bow. Dust on the water, cries on the water, then vacuity and silence. The East has swept over this colony of the West. And still its generations pass on, rhythmically swinging; slaves of Nature, not, as in the West, rebels against her; cyclical as her seasons and her stars; infinite as her storms of dust; identical as the leaves of her trees; purposeless as her cyclones and her earthquakes.

The music stops and I rub my eyes. Yes, it is only the club, only tea and twaddle! Or am I wrong? There is more in these men and women than appears. They stand for the West, for the energy of the world, for all, in this vast Nature, that is determinate and purposive, not passively repetitionary. And if they do not know it, if they never hear the strain that transposes them and their work into a tragic dream, if tennis is tennis to them, and a valse a valse, and an Indian a native, none the less they are what a poet would see

them to be, an oasis in the desert, a liner on the ocean, ministers of the life within life that is the hope, the inspiration, and the meaning of the world. In my heart of hearts I apologise as I prolong the banalities of parting, and almost vow never again to abuse Gounod's music.

V

A MYSTERY PLAY

A FEW lamps set on the floor lit up the white roof. On either side the great hall was open to the night; and now and again a bird flew across, or a silent figure flitted from dark to dark. On a low platform sat the dancers, gorgeously robed. All were boys. The leader, a peacock-fan flashing in his head-dress, personated Krishna. Beside him sat Rhada, his wife. The rest were the milkmaids of the legend. They sat like statues, and none of them moved at our entry. But the musicians, who were seated on the ground, rose and salaamed, and instantly began to play. There were five instruments—a miniature harmonium (terrible innovation), two viols, of flat, unresonant tone, a pair of cymbals, and a small drum. The ear, at first, detected little but discordant chaos, but by degrees a form became apparent—short phrases, of strong rhythm, in a different scale from ours, repeated again and again, and strung on a thread of loose improvisation. Every now and again the musicians burst into song. Their voices were harsh and nasal, but their art was compli-

cated and subtle. Clearly, this was not barbarous music, it was only strange, and its interest increased, as the ear became accustomed to it. Suddenly, as though they could resist no longer, the dancers, who had not moved, leapt from the platform and began their dance. It was symbolical; Krishna was its centre, and the rest were wooing him. Desire and its frustration and fulfilment were the theme. Yet it was not sensual, or not merely so. The Hindus interpret in a religious spirit this legendary sport of Krishna with the milk-maids. It symbolises the soul's wooing of God. And so these boys interpreted it. Their passion, though it included the flesh, was not of the flesh. The mood was rapturous, but not abandoned; ecstatic, but not orgiastic. There were moments of a hushed suspense when hardly a muscle moved; only the arms undulated and the feet and hands vibrated. Then a break into swift whirling, on the toes or on the knees, into leaping and stamping, swift flight and pursuit. A pause again; a slow march; a rush with twinkling feet; and always, on those young faces, even in the moment of most excitement, a look of solemn rapture, as though they were carried out of themselves into the divine. I have seen dancing more accomplished, more elaborate, more astonishing than this. But never any that seemed to me to fulfil so well the finest purposes of the art. The Russian ballet, in the retrospect, seems trivial by comparison. It was secular; but this was religious.

For the first time I seemed to catch a glimpse of what the tragic dance of the Greeks might have been like. The rhythms were not unlike those of Greek choruses, the motions corresponded strictly to the rhythms, and all was attuned to a high religious mood. In such dancing the flesh becomes spirit, the body a transparent emblem of the soul.

After that the play, I confess, was a drop into bathos. We descended to speech, even to tedious burlesque. But the analogy was all the closer to mediæval mysteries. In ages of Faith religion is not only sublime ; it is intimate, humorous, domestic ; it sits at the hearth and plays in the nursery. So it is in India where the age of Faith has never ceased. What was represented that night was an episode in the story of Krishna. The characters were the infant god, his mother, Jasodha, and an ancient Brahmin who has come from her own country to congratulate her on the birth of a child. He is a comic character—the sagging belly and the painted face of the pantomime. He answers Jasodha's inquiries after friends and relations at home. She offers him food. He professes to have no appetite, but, on being pressed, demands portentous measures of rice and flour. While she collects the material for his meal, he goes to bathe in the Jumna ; and the whole ritual of his ablutions is elaborately travestied, even a crocodile being introduced in the person of one of the musicians, who rudely pulls him by the leg as he is rolling in

imaginary water. His bathing finished, he retires and cooks his food. When it is ready he falls into prayer. But during his abstraction the infant Krishna crawls up and begins devouring the food. Returning to himself, the Brahmin, in a rage, runs off into the darkness of the hall. Jasodha pursues him and brings him back. And he begins once more to cook his food. This episode was repeated three times in all its detail, and I confess I found it insufferably tedious. The third time Jasodha scolds the child and asks him why he does it. He replies—and here comes the pretty point of the play—that the Brahmin, in praying to God and offering him the food, unwittingly is praying to him and offering to him, and in eating the food he has but accepted the offering. The mother does not understand, but the Brahmin does, and prostrates himself before his Lord.

This is crude enough art, but at any rate it is genuine. Like all primitive art, it is a representation of what is traditionally believed and popularly felt. The story is familiar to the audience and intimate to their lives. It represents details which they witness every day, and at the same time it has religious significance. Out of it might grow a great drama, as once in ancient Greece. And perhaps from no other origin can such a drama arise.

VI

AN INDIAN SAINT

IT was at Benares that we met him. He led us through the maze of the bazaars, his purple robe guiding us like a star, and brought us out by the mosque of Aurungzebe. Thence a long flight of stairs plunged sheer to the Ganges, shining below in the afternoon sun. We descended; but, turning aside before we reached the shore, came to a tiny house perched on a terrace above the ghat. We took off our shoes in the anteroom and passed through a second chamber, with its river-side open to the air, and reached a tiny apartment, where he motioned us to a divan. We squatted and looked round. Some empty bottles were the only furniture. But on the wall hung the picture we had come to see. It was a symbolic tree, and perhaps as much like a tree as what it symbolised was like the universe. Embedded in its trunk and branches were coloured circles and signs, and from them grew leaves and flowers of various hues. Below was a garden lit by a rising sun, and a black river where birds and beasts pursued and devoured one another. At our request he took a pointer and began to

explain. I am not sure that I well understood or well remember, but something of this kind was the gist of it. In the beginning was Parabrahma, existing in himself, a white circle at the root of the tree. Whence sprang, following the line of the trunk, the egg of the universe, pregnant with all potentialities. Thence came the energy of Brahma; and of this there were three aspects, the Good, the Evil, and the Neuter, symbolised by three triangles in a circle. Thence the trunk continued, but also thence emerged a branch to the right and one to the left. The branch to the right was Illusion and ended in God; the branch to the left was Ignorance and ended in the Soul. Thus the Soul contemplates Illusion under the form of her gods. Up the line of the trunk came next the Energy of Nature; then Pride; then Egotism and Individuality; whence branched to one side Mind, to the other the senses and the passions. Then followed the elements, fire, air, water, and earth; then the vegetable creation; then corn; and then, at the summit of the tree, the primitive Man and Woman, type of Humanity. The garden below was Eden, until the sun rose; but with light came discord and conflict, symbolised by the river and the beasts. Evil and conflict belong to the nature of the created world; and the purpose of religion is by contemplation to enable the Soul to break its bodies, and the whole creation to return again to Parabrahma, whence it sprung.

Why did it spring? He did not know. For good or for evil? He could not say. What he knew he knew, and what he did not know he did not. "Some say there is no God and no Soul." He smiled. "Let them!" His certainty was complete. "Can the souls of men be reincarnated as animals?" He shrugged his shoulders. "Who can say?" I tried to put in a plea for the life of action, but he was adamant; contemplation and contemplation alone can deliver us. "Our good men," I said, "desire to make the world better, rather than to save their own souls." "Our sages," he replied, "are sorry for the world, but they know they cannot help it." His religion, I urged, denied all sense to the process of history. "There may be process in matter," he replied, "but there is none in God." I protested that I loved individual souls, and did not want them absorbed in Parabrahma. He laughed his good cheery laugh, out of his black beard, but it was clear that he held me to be a child, imprisoned in the Ego. I felt like that, and I hugged my Ego; so presently he ministered to it with sweetmeats. He even ate with us, and smoked a cigarette. He was the most human of men; so human that I thought his religion could not be as inhuman as it sounded. But it was the religion of the East, not of the West. It refused all significance to the temporal world; it took no account of society and its needs; it sought to destroy, not to develop, the sense and the power of Individuality. It did not

say, but it implied, that creation was a mistake; and if it did not profess pessimism, pessimism was its logical outcome. I do not know whether it is the religion of a wise race; but I am sure it could never be that of a strong one.

But I loved the saint, and felt that he was a brother. Next morning, as we drifted past the long line of ghats, watching the bright figures on the terraces and stairs, the brown bodies in the water, and the Brahmins squatting on the shore, we saw him among the bathers, and he called to us cheerily. We waved our hands and passed on, never to see him again. East had not met West, but at least they had shaken hands across the gulf. The gulf, however, was profound; for many and many incarnations will be needed before one soul at least can come even to wish to annihilate itself in the Universal.

VII

A VILLAGE IN BENGAL

AT 6 A.M. we got out of the train at a station on the Ganges; and after many delays found ourselves drifting down the river in a houseboat. To lie on cushions, sheltered from the sun, looking out on the moving shore, to the sound of the leisurely plash of oars, is elysium after a night in the train. We had seven hours of it, and I could have wished it were more. But towards sunset we reached our destination. At the wharf a crowd of servants were waiting to touch the feet of our hosts who had travelled with us. They accompanied us through a tangle of palms, bananas, mangoes, canes, past bamboo huts raised on platforms of hard, dry mud, to the central place where a great banyan stood in front of the temple. We took off our shoes and entered the enclosure, followed by half the village, silent, dignified, and deferential. Over ruined shrines of red brick, elaborately carved, clambered and twined the sacred peepul tree. And within a more modern building were housed images of Krishna and Rhada, and other symbols of what we call too hastily idolatry. Outside

was a circular platform of brick where these dolls are washed in milk at the great festivals of the year. We passed on, and watched the village weaver at his work, sitting on the ground with his feet in a pit working the pedals of his loom; while outside, in the garden, a youth was running up and down setting up, thread by thread, the long strands of the warp. By the time we reached the house it was dusk. A lamp was brought into the porch. Musicians and singers squatted on the floor. Behind them a white-robed crowd faded into the night. And we listened to hymns composed by the village saint, who had lately passed away.

First there was a prayer for forgiveness. "Lord, forgive us our sins. You *must* forgive, for you are called the merciful. And it's so easy for you! And, if you don't, what becomes of your reputation?" Next, a call to the ferry. "Come and cross over with me. Krishna is the boat and Rhada the sail. No storms can wreck us. Come, cross over with me." Then a prayer for deliverance from the "well" of the world where we are imprisoned by those dread foes the five senses of the mind. Then a rhapsody on God, invisible, incomprehensible. "He speaks, but He is not seen. He lives in the room with me, but I cannot find Him. He brings to market His moods, but the marketer never appears. Some call Him fire, some ether. But I ask His name in vain. I suppose I am such a fool that they will not tell it me." Then a strange ironical address to

Krishna. "Really, sir, your conduct is very odd! You flirt with the Gopis! You put Rhada in a sulk, and then ask to be forgiven! You say you are a god, and yet you pray to God! Really, sir, what are we to think?" Lastly, a mystic song, how Krishna has plunged into the ocean of Rhada; how he is there drifting, helpless and lost. Can we not save him? But no! It is because his love is not perfect and pure. And that is why he must be incarnated again and again in the avatars.

Are these people idolaters, these dignified old men, these serious youths, these earnest, grave musicians? Look at their temple, and you say "Yes." Listen to their hymns, and you say "No." Reformers want to educate them, and, perhaps, they are right. But if education is to mean the substitution of the gramophone and music-hall songs for this traditional art, these native hymns? I went to bed pondering, and was awakened at six by another chorus telling us it was time to get up. We did so, and visited the school, set up by my friend as an experiment; a mud floor, mud-lined walls, all scrupulously clean; and squatting round the four sides children of all ages, all reciting their lessons at once, and all the lessons different. They were learning to read and write their native language, and that, at least, seemed harmless enough. But parents complained that it unfitted them for the fields. "Our fathers did not do it"—that, said my impatient young

host, is their reply to every attempt at reform. In his library were all the works of Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Wells, and Shaw, as well as all the technical journals of scientific agriculture. He lectured them on the chemical constituents of milk and the crossing of sugar-canes. They embraced his feet, sang their hymns, and did as their fathers had done. He has a hard task before him, but one far better worth attempting than the legal and political activities in which most young Zemindars indulge. And, as he said, here you see the fields and hear the birds, and here you can bathe in the Ganges. We did; and then breakfasted; and then set out in palanquins for the nearest railway station. The bearers sang a rhythmic chant as they bore us smoothly along through mustard and pulses, yellow and orange and mauve. The sun blazed hot; the bronzed figures streamed with sweat; the cheerful voices never failed or flagged. I dozed and drowsed, while East and West in my mind wove a web whose pattern I cannot trace. But a pattern there is. And some day historians will be able to find it.

VIII

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

As we dropped down the Hooghly they pointed to a temple on the shore as lately the home of Sri Ramakrishna. He was only a name to me, and I did not pay much attention, though I had his "Gospel"[1] actually under my arm. I was preoccupied with the sunset, burning behind a veil of smoke; and presently, as we landed, with the great floating haystacks smouldering at the wharf in the red afterglow. As we waited for the tram, someone said, "Would you like to see Kàli?" and we stepped aside to the little shrine. Within it was the hideous idol, black and many-armed, decked with tinsel and fed with the blood of goats; and there swept over me a wave of the repulsion I had felt from the first for the Hindu religion, its symbols, its cult, its architecture, even its philosophy. Seated in the tram, it was with an effort that I opened the "Gospel" of Sri Ramakrishna. But at once my attention was arrested. This was an account by a disciple of the life and sayings of his master. And presently I read the following:

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[1] *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. Second Edition. Part I. Madras: Published by the Ramakrishna Mission. 1912.

"*Disciple.* Then, sir, one may hold that God is 'with form.' But surely He is not the earthen image that is worshipped!

"*Master.* But, my dear sir, why should you call it an earthen image? Surely the Image Divine is made of the Spirit!

"The disciple cannot follow this. He goes on: But is it not one's duty, sir, to make it clear to those who worship images that God is not the same as the clay form they worship, and that in worshipping they should keep God Himself in view and not the clay images?

. . . .

"*Master.* You talk of 'images made of clay.' Well, there often comes a necessity of worshipping even such images as these. God Himself has provided these various forms of worship. The Lord has done all this—to suit different men in different stages of knowledge.

"The mother so arranges the food for her children that every one gets what agrees with him. Suppose she has five children. Having a fish to cook, she makes different dishes out of it. She can give each one of the children what suits him exactly. One gets rich *polow* with the fish, while she gives only a little soup to another who is of weak digestion; she makes a sauce of sour tamarind for the third, fries the fish for the fourth, and so on, exactly as it happens to agree with the stomach. Don't you see?

"*Disciple*. Yes, sir, now I do. The Lord is to be worshipped in the image of clay as a spirit by the beginner. The devotee, as he advances, may worship Him independently of the image.

"*Master*. Yes. And again, when he sees God he realises that everything—image and all—is a manifestation of the Spirit. To him the image is made of Spirit—not of clay. God is a Spirit."

As I read this, I remembered the answer invariably given to me when I asked about Hindu idolatry. The people, I was told, even the humblest and most ignorant, worshipped not the idol but what it symbolised. Actually, this hideous Kali stood to them for the Divine Mother. And I was told of an old woman, racked with rheumatism, who had determined at last to seek relief from the goddess. She returned with radiant face. She had seen the Mother! And she had no more rheumatism. In this popular religion, it would seem, the old cosmic elements have dropped out, and the human only persist. So that even the terrifying form of Shiva, the Destroyer, stands only for the divine husband of Parvati, the divine wife. Hinduism, I admitted, is not as inhuman and superstitious as it looks. But I admitted it reluctantly and with many reserves, remembering all I had seen and heard of obscene rites and sculptures, of the perpetual repetition of the names of God, of parasitic Brahmins and self-torturing ascetics.

What manner of man, then, was this Sri Ramakrishna? I turned the pages and read:

"The disciples were walking about the garden. M. walked by himself at the cluster of five trees. It is about five in the afternoon. Coming back to the verandah, north of the Master's chamber, M. comes upon a strange sight. The Master is standing still. Narendra is singing a hymn. He and three or four other disciples are standing with the Master in their midst. M. is charmed with their song. Never in his life has he heard a sweeter voice. Looking at the Master, M. marvels and becomes speechless. The Master stands motionless. His eyes are fixed. It is hard to say whether he is breathing or not. This state of ecstasy, says a disciple in low tones, is called Samadhi. M. has never seen or heard of anything like this. He thinks to himself, 'Is it possible that the thought of God can make a man forget the world? How great must be his faith and love for God who is thrown into such a state!'"

"Yes," I said, "that is the Hindu ideal—ecstatic contemplation." Something in me leapt to approve it; but the stronger pull was to Hellenism and the West. "Go your way, Ramakrishna," I said, "but your way is not mine. For me and my kind action not meditation; the temporal not the eternal; the human not the ultra-divine; Socrates not Ramakrishna!" But hardly had I said the words when I read on:

"M. enters. Looking at him the Master laughs and laughs. He cries out, 'Why, look! There he is again!' The boys all join in the merriment. M. takes his seat, and the Master tells Narendra and the other disciples what has made him laugh. He says:

"'Once upon a time a small quantity of opium was given to a certain peacock at four o'clock in the afternoon. Well, punctually at four the next afternoon who should come in but the selfsame peacock, longing for a repetition of the favour—another dose of opium!' —(Laughter.)

"M. sat watching the Master as he amused himself with the boys. He kept up a running fire of chaff, and it seemed as if these boys were his own age and he was playing with them. Peals of laughter and brilliant flashes of humour follow upon one another, calling to mind the image of a fair when the Joy of the World is to be had for sale."

I rubbed my eyes. Was this India or Athens? Is East East? Is West West? Are there any opposites that exclude one another? Or is this all-comprehensive Hinduism, this universal toleration, this refusal to recognise ultimate antagonisms, this "mush," in a word, as my friends would dub it—is this, after all, the truest and profoundest vision?

And I read in my book:

"M.'s egotism is now completely crushed. He thinks

to himself: What this God-man says is indeed perfectly true. What business have I to go about preaching to others? Have I myself known God? Do I love God? About God I know nothing. It would indeed be the height of folly and vulgarity itself, of which I should be ashamed, to think of teaching others! This is not mathematics, or history, or literature; it is the science of God! Yes, I see the force of the words of this holy man."

IX

THE MONSTROUS REGIMEN OF WOMEN

HERE at Cape Comorin, at India's southernmost point, among the sands and the cactuses and the palms rattling in the breeze, comes to us news of the Franchise Bill and of militant suffragettes. And I reflect that in this respect England is a " backward " country and Travancore an " advanced " one. Women here—except the Brahmin women—are, and always have been, politically and socially on an equality and more than an equality with men. For this is one of the few civilised States—for aught I know it is the only one—in which " matriarchy " still prevails. That doesn't mean—though the word suggests it—that women govern, though, in fact, the succession to the throne passes to women equally with men. But it means that woman is the head of the family, and that property follows her line, not the man's. All women own property equally with men, and own it in their own right. The mother's property passes to her children, but the father's passes to his mother's kin. The husband, in fact, is not regarded

as related to the wife. Relationship means descent from a common mother, whereas descent from a common father is a negligible fact, no doubt because formerly it was a questionable one. Women administer their own property, and, as I am informed, administer it more prudently than the men.

Not only so; they have in marriage the superior position occupied by men in the West. The Nair woman chooses her own husband; he comes to her house, she does not go to his; and, till recently, she could dismiss him as soon as she was tired of him. The law—man-made, no doubt!—has recently altered this, and now mutual consent is required for a valid divorce. Still the woman is, at least on this point, on an equality with the man. And the heavens have not yet fallen. As to the vote, it is not so important or so general here as at home. The people live under a paternal monarchy "by right divine." The Rajah who consolidated the kingdom, early in the eighteenth century, handed it over formally to the god of the temple, and administers it in his name. Incidentally this gave him access to temple revenues. It also makes his person sacred. So much so that in a recent prison riot, when the convicts escaped and marched to the police with their grievances, the Rajah had only to appear and tell them to march back to prison, and they did so to a man, and took their punishment. The government, it will be seen, is not by votes. Still there

are votes for local councils, and women have them equally with men. Any other arrangement would have seemed merely preposterous to the Nairs; and perhaps if any exclusion had been contemplated it would have been of men rather than of women.

Other incidental results follow from the equality of the sexes. The early marriages which are the curse of India do not prevail among the Nairs. Consequently the schooling of girls is continued later. And this State holds the record in all India for female education. We visited a school of over 600 girls, ranging from infancy to college age, and certainly I never saw school-girls look happier, keener, or more alive. Society, clearly, has not gone to pieces under "the monstrous regimen of women." Travancore claims, probably with justice, to be the premier native State; the most advanced, the most prosperous, the most happy. Because of the position of women? Well, hardly. The climate is delightful, the soil fertile, the natural resources considerable. Every man sits under his own palm tree, and famine is unknown. The people, and especially the children, are noticeably gay, in a land where gaiety is not common. But one need not be a suffragette to hold that the equality of the sexes is one element that contributes to its well-being, and to feel that in this respect England lags far behind Travancore.

Echoes of the suffrage controversy at home have led

me to dwell upon this matter of the position of women. But, to be candid, it will not be that that lingers in my mind when I look back upon my sojourn here. What then? Perhaps a sea of palm leaves, viewed from the lighthouse top, stretching beside the sea of blue waves; perhaps a sandy river bed, with brown nude figures washing clothes in the shining pools; perhaps the oiled and golden skins glistening in the sun; perhaps naked children astride on their mothers' hips, or screaming with laughter as they race the motor-car; perhaps the huge tusked elephant that barred our way for a moment yesterday; perhaps the jungle teeming with hidden and menacing life; perhaps the seashore and its tumbling waves. One studies institutions, but one does not love them. Often one must wish that they did not exist, or existed in such perfection that their existence might be unperceived. Still, as institutions go, this, which regulates the relations of men and women, is, I suppose, the most important. So from the surf of the Arabian sea and the blaze of the Indian sun I send this little object lesson.

X

THE BUDDHA AT BURUPUDUR

To the north the cone of a volcano, rising sharp and black. To the east another. South and west a jagged chain of hills. In the foreground ricefields and cocoa palms. Everywhere intense green, untoned by grey; and in the midst of it this strange erection. Seen from below and from a distance it looks like a pyramid that has been pressed flat. In fact, it is a series of terraces built round a low hill. Six of them are rectangular; then come three that are circular; and on the highest of these is a solid dome, crowned by a cube and a spire. Round the circular terraces are set, close together, similar domes, but hollow, and pierced with lights, through which is seen in each a seated Buddha. Seated Buddhas, too, line the tops of the parapets that run round the lower terraces. And these parapets are covered with sculpture in high relief. One might fancy oneself walking round one of the ledges of Dante's "Purgatorio" meditating instruction on the walls. Here the instruction would

be for the selfish and the cruel. For what is inscribed is the legend and cult of the lord of tenderness. Much of it remains undeciphered and unexplained. But on the second terrace is recorded, on one side, the life of Sakya-Muni; on the other, his previous incarnations. The latter, taken from the "Jatakas," are naïve and charming apologues.

For example: Once the Buddha lived upon earth as a hare. In order to test him Indra came down from heaven in the guise of a traveller. Exhausted and faint, he asked the animals for help. An otter brought fish, a monkey fruit, a jackal a cup of milk. But the hare had nothing to give. So he threw himself into a fire, that the wanderer might eat his roasted flesh. Again: Once the Buddha lived upon earth as an elephant. He was met by seven hundred travellers, lost and exhausted with hunger. He told them where water would be found, and, near it, the body of an elephant for food. Then, hastening to the spot, he flung himself over a precipice, that he might provide the meal himself. Again: Once the Buddha lived upon earth as a stag. A king, who was hunting him, fell into a ravine. Whereupon the stag halted, descended, and helped him home. All round the outer wall run these pictured lessons. And opposite is shown the story of Sakya-Muni himself. We see the new-born child with his feet on lotuses. We see the fatal encounter with poverty, sickness, and death. We see the

renunciation, the sojourn in the wilderness, the attainment under the bo-tree, the preaching of the Truth. And all this sculptured gospel seems to bring home to one, better than the volumes of the learned, what Buddhism really meant to the masses of its followers. It meant, surely, not the denial of the soul or of God, but that warm impulse of pity and love that beats still in these tender and human pictures. It meant not the hope or desire for extinction, but the charming dream of thousands of lives, past and to come, in many forms, many conditions, many diverse fates. The pessimism of the master is as little likely as his high philosophy to have reached the mind or the heart of the people. The whole history of Buddhism, indeed, shows that it did not, and does not. What touched them in him was the saint and the lover of animals and men. And this love it was that flowed in streams over the world, leaving wherever it passed, in literature and art, in pictures of flowers or mountains, in fables and poems and tales, the trace of its warm and humanising flood.

Still, there is the other Buddhism, the Buddhism of the thinker; his theory of human life, its value and purpose. And it was this that filled my mind later as I sat on the summit next to a solemn Buddha against the setting sun. For a long time I was silent, meditating his doctrine. Then I spoke of children, and he said, "They grow old." I spoke of strong men, and

he said, "They grow weak." I spoke of their work and achievement, and he said, "They die." The stars came out, and I spoke of eternal law. He said, "One law concerns you—that which binds you to the wheel of life." The moon rose, and I spoke of beauty. He said, "There is one beauty—that of a soul redeemed from desire." Thereupon the West stirred in me, and cried "No!" "Desire," it said, "is the heart and essence of the world. It needs not and craves not extinction. It needs and craves perfection. Youth passes; strength passes; life passes. Yes! What of it? We have access to the youth, the strength, the life of the world. Man is born to sorrow. Yes! But he feels it as tragedy and redeems it. Not round life, not outside life, but through life is the way. Desire more and more intense, because more and more pure; not peace, but the plenitude of experience. Your foundation was false. You thought man wanted rest. He does not. We at least do not, we of the West. We want more labour; we want more stress; we want more passion. Pain we accept, for it stings us into life. Strife we accept, for it hardens us to strength We believe in action; we believe in desire. And we believe that by them we shall attain." So the West broke out in me; and I looked at him to see if he was moved. But the calm eye was untroubled, unruffled the majestic brow, unperplexed the sweet, solemn mouth. Secure in his Nirvana, he heard or he

heard me not. He had attained the life-in-death he sought. But I, I had not attained the life in life. Unhelped by him, I must go my way. The East, perhaps, he had understood. He had not understood the West.

XI

A MALAY THEATRE

It seems to be a principle among shipping companies so to arrange their connections that the traveller should be compelled to spend some days in Singapore. We evaded this necessity by taking a trip to Sumatra, but even so a day and a night remained to be disposed of. We devoted the morning to a bathe and a lunch at the Sea View Hotel, and the afternoon to the Botanical Gardens, where the most attractive flowers are the children and the most interesting gardeners their Chinese nurses. There remained the evening, and we asked about amusements. There was a bioscope, of course; there is always a bioscope; we had found one even in the tiny town of Medan, in Sumatra. There was also an opera company, performing the "Pink Girl." We seemed to know all about her without going to see her. Was there nothing else? Yes; a Malay theatre. That sounded attractive. So we took the tram through the Chinese quarter, among the "Ah Sins" and "Hup Chows," where every one was either a tailor or a washerman, and got down at a row of red

lights. This was the Alexandra Hall, and a bill informed us that the performers were the Straits Opera Company. This dismayed us a little. Still, we paid our dollars, and entered a dingy, dirty room, with a few Malays occupying the back benches and a small group of Chinese women and children in either balcony. We took our seats with half a dozen coloured aristocrats in the front rows, and looked about us. We were the only Europeans. But, to console us in our isolation, on either side of the proscenium was painted a couple of Italians in the act of embracing as one only embraces in opera. We glanced at our programme and saw that the play was the "Moon Princess," and that Afrid, a genie, figured in the cast. It was then, at least, Oriental, though it could hardly be Malay, and our spirits rose. But the orchestra quickly damped them; there was a piano, a violin, a 'cello, a clarionet, and a cornet, and from beginning to end of the performance they were never in tune with themselves or with the singers. And the music? It was sometimes Italian, sometimes Spanish, never, as far as I could detect, Oriental, and always thoroughly and frankly bad.

No matter! The curtain rose and displayed a garden. The Prince entered. He was dressed in mediæval Italian costume (a style of dress, be it said once for all, which was adopted by the whole company). With gestures of ecstatic astonishment he applied his nose to the paper roses. Then he advanced and appeared

to sing, for his mouth moved; but the orchestra drowned any notes he may have emitted. The song finished, he lay down upon a couch and slept. Whereupon there entered an ugly little girl, in a short white frock and black stockings and ribbons, with an expression of fixed gloom upon her face, and began to move her feet and arms in a parody of Oriental dancing. We thought at first that she was the Moon Princess, and felt a pang of disappointment. But she turned out to be the Spirit of Dreams; and presently she ushered in the real Princess, with whom, on the spot, the Prince, unlike ourselves, became violently enamoured. She vanished, and he woke to find her a vision. Despair of the Prince; despair of the King; despair of the Queen, not unmixed with rage, to judge from her voice and gestures. Consultation of an astrologer. Flight of the Prince in search of his beloved. Universal bewilderment and incompetence, such as may be witnessed any day in the East when anything happens at all out of the ordinary way. At this point enter the comic relief, in the form of woodcutters. I am inclined to suppose, from the delight of the audience, that there was something genuine here. But whatever it was we were unable to follow it. Eventually the woodcutters met Afrid, whether by chance or design I could not discover. At any rate, their reception was rough. To borrow the words of the synopsis, " a big fight arose and they were thrown to space " ; but not till they had

been pulled by the hair and ears, throttled and pummelled, to the general satisfaction, for something like half an hour.

The next scenes were equally vigorous. The synopsis describes them thus: "Several young princes went to Genie Janar, the father of the Moon Princess, to demand her in marriage. Afrid, a genie, met the princes, and, after having a row, they were all thrown away." The row was peculiar. Afrid took them on one by one. The combatants walked round one another, back to back, making feints in the air. Then the Prince got a blow in, which Afrid pretended to feel. But suddenly, with a hoarse laugh, he rushed again upon the foe, seized him by the throat or the arm, and (I cannot improve on the phrase) "threw him away." After all four princes were thus disposed of I left, being assured of a happy ending by the account of the concluding scene: "The Prince then took the Moon Princess to his father's kingdom, where he was married to her amidst great rejoicings."

Comment perhaps is superfluous. But as I went home in my rickshaw my mind went back to those evenings in India when I had seen Indian boys perform to Indian music dances and plays in honour of Krishna, and to the Bengal village where the assembled inhabitants had sung us hymns composed by their native saint. And I remembered that everywhere, in Egypt, in India, in Java, in Sumatra, in Japan, the gramo-

phone has made its way; that an inferior kind of harmonium is displacing the native instruments; and that the bioscope—that great instrument of education—is familiarising the peasants of the East with all that is most vulgar and most shoddy in the humour and sentiment of the West.

The Westernising of the East must come, no doubt, and ought to come. But in the process what by-products of waste, or worse! Once, surely, there must have been a genuine "Malay theatre." This is what Europe has made of it.

PART II

CHINA

I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF CHINA

SOME recent travellers have expressed disappointment or even disgust with what they saw or learned or guessed of China. My own first impression is quite contrary. The climate, it is true, for the moment, inclines one to gloomy views. An icy wind, a black sky, a cold drizzle. March in England could hardly do worse. But in Canton one almost forgets all that. Imagine a maze of narrow streets, more confused and confusing than Venice; high houses (except in the old city); and hanging parallel to these, in long, vertical lines, flags and wooden signs inscribed with huge Chinese characters, gold on black, gold on red, red or blue on white, a blaze of colour; and under it, pouring in a ceaseless stream, yellow faces, black heads, blue jackets and trousers, all on foot or borne on chairs, not a cart or carriage, rarely a pony, nobody crowding, nobody hustling or jostling, an even flow of cheerful humanity, inexhaustible, imperturbable, convincing one at first sight of the truth of all one has heard of the order, independence, and vigour of this extraordinary people.

The shops are high and spacious, level with the street, not, as in India, raised on little platforms; and commonly, within, they are cut across by a kind of arch elaborately carved and blazing with gold. Every trade may be seen plying—jade-cutters, cloth-rollers, weavers, ring-makers, rice-pounders, a thousand others. Whole animals, roasted, hang before the butchers' shops, ducks, pigs—even we saw a skinned tiger! The interest is inexhaustible; and one is lucky if one does not return with a light purse and a heavy burden of forged curios. Even the American tourist, so painfully in evidence at the hotel, is lost, drowned in this native sea. He passes in his chair; but, like oneself, he is only a drop in the ocean. Canton is China, as Benares is India. And that conjunction of ideas set me thinking.

To come from India to China is like waking from a dream. Often in India I felt that I was in an enchanted land. Melancholy, monotony, austerity; a sense as of perennial frost, spite of the light and heat; a lost region peopled with visionary forms; a purgatory of souls doing penance till the hour of deliverance shall strike; a limbo, lovely but phantasmal, unearthly, over-earthly—that is the kind of impression India left on my mind. I reach China, awake, and rub my eyes. This, of course, is the real world. This is every-day. Good temper, industry, intelligence. Nothing abnormal or over-strained. The natural man, working, marrying, begetting and rearing children, growing middle-aged,

growing old, dying—and that is all. Here it is broad daylight; but in India, moon or stars, or a subtler gleam from some higher heaven. Recall, for example, Benares—the fantastic buildings rising and falling like a sea, the stairs running up to infinity, the sacred river, the sages meditating on its banks, the sacrificial ablutions, the squealing temple-pipes, and, in the midst of this, columns of smoke, as the body returns to the elements and the soul to God. This way of disposing of the dead, when the first shock is over, lingers in the mind as something eminently religious. Death and dissolution take place in the midst of life, for death is no more a mystery than life. In the open air, in the press of men, the soul takes flight. She is no stranger, for everything is soul—houses, trees, men, the elements into which the body is resolved. Death is not annihilation, it is change of form; and through all changes of form the essence persists.

But now turn back to Canton. We pass the shops of the coffin-makers. We linger. But "No stop," says our guide; "better coffins soon." "Soon" is what the guide-books call the "City of the Dead." A number of little chapels; and laid in each a great lacquered coffin in which the dead man lives. I say "lives" advisedly, for there is set for his use a table and a chair, and every morning he is provided with a cup of tea. A bunch of paper, yellow and white, symbolises his money; and perhaps a couple of figures represent

attendants. There he lives, quite simply and naturally as he had always lived, until the proper time and place is discovered in which he may be buried. It may be months, it may be, or rather, might have been, years; for I am told that a reforming Government has limited the time to six months. And after burial? Why, presumably he lives still. But not with the life of the universal soul. Oh no! There have been mystics in China, but the Chinese are not mystical. What he was he still is, an eating and drinking creature, and, one might even conjecture, a snob. For if one visits the family chapel of the Changs—another of the sights of Canton—one sees ranged round the walls hundreds of little tablets, painted green and inscribed in gold. These are the memorials of the deceased. And they are arranged in three classes, those who pay most being in the first and those who pay least in the third. One can even reserve one's place—first, second, or third—while one is still alive, by a white tablet. You die, and the green is substituted. And so, while you yet live, you may secure your social status after death. How—how British! Yes, the word is out; and I venture to record a suspicion that has long been maturing in my mind. The Chinese are not only Western; among the Western they are English. Their minds move as ours do; they are practical, sensible, reasonable. And that is why—as it would seem—they have more sympathy with Englishmen, if not with the English Government, than

with any other Westerners. East may be East and West West, though I very much doubt it. But if there be any truth in the aphorism, we must define our terms. The East must be confined to India, and China included in the West. That as a preliminary correction. I say nothing yet about Japan. But I shall have more to say, I hope, about China.

II

NANKING

THE Chinese, one is still told, cannot and will not change. On the other hand, Professor Ross writes a book entitled *The Changing Chinese*. And anyone may see that the Chinese educated abroad are transformed, at any rate externally, out of all recognition. In Canton I met some of the officials of the new Government; and found them, to the outward sense, pure Americans. The dress, the manners, the accent, the intellectual outfit—all complete! Whether, in some mysterious sense, they remain Chinese at the core I do not presume to affirm or deny. But an external transformation so complete must imply *some* inward change. Foreign residents in China deplore the foreign-educated product. I have met some who almost gnash their teeth at "young China." But this seems rather hard on China. For nearly a century foreigners have been exhorting her, at the point of the bayonet, to adopt Western ways and Western ideas. And when she begins to do so, the same people turn round and accuse her of unpardonable levity, and treachery to her own

traditions. What *do* foreigners want? the Chinese may well ask. I am afraid the true answer is, that they want nothing but concessions, interest on loans, and trade profits, at all and every cost to China.

But I must not deviate into politics. What suggested this train of thought was the student-guide supplied me at Nanking by the American missionary college. There he was, complete American; and, I fear I must add, boring as only Americans can bore. Still, he showed me Nanking, and Nanking is worth seeing, though the interest of it is somewhat tragic. A wall 20 to 40 feet thick, 40 to 90 feet high, and 22 miles in circuit (I take these figures on trust) encloses an area larger than that of any other Chinese city. But the greater part of this area is fields and ruins. You pass through the city gate in the train, and find yourself in the country. You alight, and you are still in the country. A carriage takes you, in time, to the squalid village, or series of villages, where are housed the 350,000 inhabitants of modern Nanking. Among them are quartered the khaki-clad soldiers of new China, the new national flag draped at the gate of their barracks. Meantime old China swarms, unregenerate, in the narrow little streets, chaffering, chattering, laughing in its rags as though there had never been a siege, a surrender, and a revolution. Beggars display their stumps and their sores, grovelling on the ground like brutes. Ragged children run for miles beside the carriage, singing for

alms; and stop at last, laughing, as though it had been a good joke to run so far and get nothing for it. One monument in all this scene of squalor arrests attention —the now disused examination hall. It is a kind of rabbit-warren of tiny cells, six feet deep, four feet broad, and six feet high; row upon row of them, opening on narrow unroofed corridors; no doors now, nor, I should suppose, at any time, for it would be impossible to breathe in these boxes if they had lids. Here, for a week or a fortnight, the candidates sat and excogitated, unable to lie down at night, sleeping, if they could, in their chairs. And no wonder if, every now and again, one of them incontinently died and was hauled out, a corpse, through a hole in the wall; or went mad and ran amuck among examiners and examinees. For centuries, as is well known, this system selected the rulers of China; and whole lives, from boyhood to extreme old age, were spent in preparing for the examinations. Now all this is abolished; and some people appear to regret it. Once more, what *do* the foreigners want?

The old imperial city, where once the Ming dynasty reigned, was destroyed in the Taiping Rebellion. The Tartar city, where before the revolution 3000 mandarins lived on their pensions, was burnt in the siege of 1911. Of these cities nothing remains but their huge walls and gates and the ruins of their houses. The principal interest of Nanking, the so-called "Ming tombs," lies outside the walls. And the interest is not the tombs,

but the road to them. It is lined by huge figures carved out of monoliths. Brutes first—lions, camels, elephants, horses, a pair of each lying down and a pair standing; then human figures, military and civil officers. What they symbolise I cannot tell. They are said to guard the road. And very impressive they are in the solitude. Not so what they lead to, which is merely a hill, artificial, I suppose, piled on a foundation of stone. Once, my guide informed me, there was a door giving admission; and within, a complete house, with all its furniture, in stone. But the door is sealed, and for centuries no one has explored the interior. I suggested excavation, but was told the superstition of the inhabitants forbade it. "Besides," said my guide, "the Chinese are not curious." I wonder? Whether or no they are curious, they are certainly superstitious. Apropos, a gunboat ran aground on the Yangtse. The river was falling, and there seemed no chance of getting off for months. The officers made up their minds to it, and fraternised with the priest of a temple on the bank. The priest one day asked for a photograph of the boat. They gave him one, and he asked them to dinner. After dinner he solemnly burnt the photograph to his god. And—"would you believe it?"—next day a freshet came down and set the vessel afloat. Which shows how superstitions are generated and maintained in a world so little subject to law, on the surface of it, as ours.

My anecdote has brought me to the Yangtse, and it is on a river-boat that I write. Hour after hour there passes by the panorama of hills and plain, of green wheat and yellow rape, of the great flood with its flocks of wild duck, of fishers' cabins on the shore and mud-built thatched huts, of junks with bamboo-threaded sails skimming on flat bottoms, of high cliffs with monasteries perched on perilous ledges, of changing light and shade, of burning sunset and the stars. Travelling by river is the best of all travelling—smooth, slow, quiet, and soothingly contemplative. All China, I am informed by some pessimists, is in a state of anarchy, actual or latent. It may be. But it is difficult to believe it among these primitive industrious people living and working as they have lived and worked for 4000 years. Any other country, I suppose, in such a crisis as the present would be seething with civil war. But China ? When one puts the point to the foreigner who has been talking of anarchy he says, "Ah ! but the Chinese are so peaceable ! They don't mind whether there's a Government or no. They just go on without it !" Exactly ! That is the wonderful thing. But even that seems to annoy the foreigner. Once more, what *does* he want ? I give it up.

III

IN THE YANGTSE GORGES

AT the upper end of the gorge poetically named "Ox Liver and Horse Lungs" I watched the steamboat smoking and splashing up stream. She had traversed in a few hours the distance I, in my houseboat, had taken three days to cover; and certainly she is much more convenient and much more comfortable. That, however, is not necessarily an advantage. What may be urged with some force is that travelling by steamboat is more humane. It dispenses with human labour of a peculiarly dangerous and strenuous kind. Twenty-eight boatmen are attached to my single person. A big junk may have a crew of two hundred. When the wind is not fair they must row or tow; and towing is not like towing along the Thames! Suddenly you see the men leap out and swarm up a precipice. Presently they appear high above, creeping with the line along a ledge of rock. And your "boy" remarks nonchalantly, "Plenty coolie fall here. Too high place." Or they are clambering over boulders, one or two told off to dis-entangle the line wherever it catches. Or they are

struggling along a greasy slope, their bare feet gripping the mud, hardly able to advance a step or even to hold their own. As a labour-saving machine one must welcome the advent of the steamboat, as one is constrained to welcome even that of the motor-omnibus. But from the traveller's point of view it is different. Railways and steamboats enable more of us to travel, and to travel farther, in space. But in experience he travels the farthest who travels the slowest. A mediæval student or apprentice walking through Europe on foot really did see the world. A modern tourist sees nothing but the inside of hotels. Unless, that is, he chooses to walk, or ride, or even cycle. Then it is different. Then he begins to see. As now I, from my houseboat, begin to see China. Not profoundly, of course, but somehow intimately. For instance, while my crew eat their midday rice, I stroll up to the neighbouring village. Contrary to all I have been taught to expect, I find it charming, picturesque, not so dirty after all, not so squalid, not so poor. The people, too, who, one thought, would insult or mob the foreigner, either take no notice, or, if you greet them, respond in the friendliest way. They may, of course, be explaining to one another that you are a foreign devil, but nothing in their countenance or manner suggests it. The children are far better-mannered than in most European countries. They may follow you, and chatter and laugh; but at least they have not learnt to beg.

Curiosity they have, and gaiety, but I detect no sign of hostility. I walk down the long street, with its shops and roomy houses—far roomier and more prosperous-looking than in most Indian villages—and come to the temple. Smilingly I am invited to enter. There are no mysteries in Chinese religion. I begin to wonder, indeed, whether there is any religion left. For everywhere I find the temples and monasteries either deserted or turned into schools or barracks. This one is deserted. It is like a series of lumber-rooms, full of dusty idols. The idols were once gaudy, brightly painted "to look like life," with beards and whiskers of real hair. But now their splendour is dimmed. The demons scowl to no purpose. To no purpose the dragons coil. No trespasser threatens the god behind his dingy curtains. In one chamber only a priest kneels before the shrine and chants out of a book while he taps a bronze vessel with a little hammer. Else, solitude, vacuity, and silence. Is he Buddhist or Taoist? I have no language in which to ask. I can only accept with mute gestures the dusty seat he offers and the cup of lukewarm tea. What has happened to religion? So far as I can make out, something like the "disestablishment of the Church." The Republic has been at work; and in the next village I see what it has been doing. For there the temple is converted into a school. Delightedly the scholars show me round. On the outside wall, for him who runs to read, are scored up long

addition sums in our Western figures. Inside, the walls are hung with drawings of birds and beasts, of the human skeleton and organs, even of bacteria! There are maps of China and of the world. The children even produce in triumph an English reading-book, though I must confess they do not seem to have profited by it much. Still, they can say "cat" when you show them a picture of the creature; which is more than I could do in Chinese. And China does not change? Wait a generation! This, remember, is a tiny village in the heart of the country, more than 1000 miles from the coast. And this is happening all over the Celestial Empire, I suppose. I start to return to my boat, but have not gone a quarter of a mile before I hear a shout, and looking back find half the school following me and escorting their teacher, who speaks English. He regrets to have missed my visit; will I not return and let him show me the school? I excuse myself, and he walks with me to the boat, making what conversation he can. One remark I remember—"China a good place now; China a republic." And I thought, as we exchanged cards, that he represented the Republic more essentially than the politicians whom foreigners so severely criticise. Anyhow, Republic or no, China is being transformed. And there is something other than steamboats to attest it.

Which brings me back to my starting-point. On the steamboat you have no adventures. But on the house-

boat you do. For instance, the other day the rope broke as we were towing up a rapid, and down we dashed, turning round and round, and annihilating in five minutes the labour of an hour. I was afraid, I confess; but the boatmen took it as a matter of course. In some way, incomprehensible to me, they got us into the bank, and, looking up, the first thing I saw was an embankment in construction—the railway from Ichang to Chungking. When it is finished we shall go by train—not even by steamboat,—and so see nothing except tunnels. Certainly, we shall not be compelled to pass the night in a small village; nor permitted to see the sunset behind these lovely hills and the moon rising over the river between the cliffs of the gorge. Nor shall we then be delayed, as I was yesterday, till the water should run down, and so tempted to walk into the country. I made for a side valley, forded a red torrent, and found myself among fields and orchards; green of mulberries, green of fruit trees, green of young corn; and above, the purple hills, with all their bony structure showing under the skin of soil. I followed a high path, greeted by the peasants I met with a charming smile and that delightful gesture whereby, instead of shaking your hand, they clasp theirs and shake them *at* you. I came at last to a solitary place, and, sitting down there, watched the evening light on the mountains. I watched, and they seemed to be saying something. What?

"Rocks that are bones, earth that is flesh, what, what do you mean
Eyeing me silently?
Streams that are voices, what, what do you say?
You are pouring an ocean into a cup. Yet pour, that all it can hold
May at least be water of yours."

At dusk I got back to the river, and found that a wind had sprung up and the junks were trying to pass the rapid. There must have been fifty of them crowded together. They could only pass one by one; and the scene was pandemonium. The Chinese are even noisier than the Italians, and present the same appearance of confusion. But in some mysterious way an order is always getting evolved. On this occasion it seemed to be perfectly understood which boat should go first. And presently there she was, in mid-rapid, apparently not advancing an inch, the ropes held taut from a causeway a quarter of a mile off. At last the strain suddenly ceased, and she moved quickly up stream. Another followed. Then it was dark. And we had to pass the night, after all, tossing uneasily in the rough water. Soon after dawn we started again. I went across to the causeway, and watched the trackers at work— twenty each on two ropes, hardly advancing a step in five minutes. Then the boat's head swung into shore, the tension ceased; something had happened. I waited half an hour or so. "Nothing doing," in the expressive American phrase. Then I went back. We had

sprung a leak, and my cabin was converted into a swimming-bath. Another hour or so repairing this. Then the rope had to be brought back and attached again. At last we started for the second time, and in half an hour got safely through the hundred yards of racing waters into the bank above. At ten I got my breakfast, and we started to sail with a fair wind. It dropped. Rain came on. My crew (as always in that conjuncture) put up their awning and struck work. So here we are at 1 P.M., in a heavy thunder-shower, a mile from the place we tried to leave at six o'clock this morning. This is the ancient method of travelling —four thousand years old, I suppose. It is *very* inconvenient! Oh, yes—BUT!——

IV

PEKIN

PROFESSOR GILES tells us, no doubt truly, that the Chinese are not a religious nation. No nation, I think, ever was, unless it be the Indians. But religious impulses sweep over nations and pass away, leaving deposits—rituals, priesthoods, and temples. Such an impulse once swept over China, in the form of Buddhism; and I am now visiting its deposit in the neighbourhood of Pekin. Scattered over the hills to the west of the city are a number of monastery temples. Some are deserted; some are let as villas to Europeans; some, like the one where I am staying, have still their complement of monks—in this temple, I am told, some three to four hundred. But neither here nor anywhere have I seen anything that suggests vitality in the religion. I entered one of the temples yesterday at dusk and watched the monks chanting and processing round a shrine from which loomed in the shadow a gigantic bronze-gold Buddha. They began to giggle like children at the entrance of the foreigner and never took their eyes off us. Later, individual monks came running

round the shrines, beating a gong as though to call the attention of the deity, and shouting a few words of perfunctory praise or prayer. Irreverence more complete I have not seen even in Italy, nor beggary more shameless. Such is the latter end of the gospel of Buddha in China. It seems better that he should sit deserted in his Indian caves than be dishonoured by such mummeries.

But once it must have been otherwise. Once this religion was alive. And then it was that men chose these exquisite sites for contemplation. The Chinese Buddhists had clearly the same sense for the beauty of nature that the Italian Franciscans had. In secluded woods and copses their temples nestle, courts and terraces commanding superb views over the great plain to Pekin. The architecture is delicate and lovely; tiled roofs, green or gold or grey, cornices elaborately carved and painted in lovely harmonies of blue and green; fine trees religiously preserved; the whole building so planned and set as to enhance, not destroy, the lines and colour of the landscape. To wander from one of these temples to another, to rest in them in the heat of the day and sleep in them at night, is to taste a form of travel impossible in Europe now, though familiar enough there in the Middle Ages. Specially delightful is it to come at dusk upon a temple apparently deserted; to hear the bell tinkle as the wind moves it; to enter a dusky hall and start to see

in a dark recess huge figures, fierce faces, glimmering maces and swords that seem to threaten the impious intruder.

This morning there was a festival, and the people from the country crowded into the temple. Very bright and gay they looked in their gala clothes. The women especially were charming; painted, it is true, but painted quite frankly, to better nature, not to imitate her. Their cheeks were like peaches or apples, and their dresses correspondingly gay. Why they had come did not appear; not, apparently, to worship, for their mood was anything but religious. Some perhaps came to carry away a little porcelain boy or girl as guarantee of a baby to come. For the Chinese, by appropriate rites, can determine the sex of a child—a secret unknown as yet to the doctors of Europe! Some, perhaps, came to cure their eyes, and will leave at the shrine a picture on linen of the organs affected. Some are merely there for a jaunt, to see the sights and the country. We saw a group on their way home, climbing a steep hill for no apparent purpose except to look at the view. What English agricultural labourer would do as much? But the Chinese are not "agricultural labourers"; they are independent peasants; and a people so gay, so friendly, so well-mannered and self-respecting I have found nowhere else in the world.

The country round Pekin has the beauty we associate with Italy. First the plain, with its fresh spring green,

its dusty paths, its grey and orange villages, its cypress groves, its pagodas, its memorial slabs. Then the hills, swimming in amethyst, bare as those of Umbria, fine and clean in colour and form. For this beauty I was unprepared. I have even read that there is no natural beauty in China. And I was unprepared for Pekin too. How can I describe it? At this time of year, seen from above, it is like an immense green park. You mount the tremendous wall, 40 feet high, 14 miles round, as broad at the top as a London street, and you look over a sea of spring-green tree-tops, from which emerge the orange-gold roofs of palaces and temples. You descend, and find the great roads laid out by Kubla Khan, running north and south, east and west, and thick, as the case may be, with dust or mud; and opening out of them a maze of streets and lanes, one-storeyed houses, grey walls and roofs, shop fronts all ablaze with gilt carving, all trades plying, all goods selling, rickshaws, mule-carts canopied with blue, swarming pedestrians, eight hundred thousand people scurrying like ants in this gigantic framework of Cyclopean walls and gates. Never was a medley of greatness and squalor more strange and impressive. One quarter only is commonplace, that of the Legations. There is the Wagon-lits Hotel, with its cosmopolitan stream of Chinese politicians, European tourists, concession-hunters, and the like. There are the Americans,

occupying and guarding the great north gate, and playing baseball in its precincts. There are the Germans, the Dutch, the French, the Italians, the Russians, the Japanese; and there, in a magnificent Chinese palace, are the British, girt by that famous wall of the siege on which they have characteristically written "Lest we forget!" Forget what? The one or two children who died in the Legation, and the one or two men who were killed? Or the wholesale massacre, robbery, and devastation which followed when the siege was relieved? This latter, I fear, the Chinese are not likely to forget soon. Yet it would be better if they could. And better if the Europeans could remember much that they forget—could remember that they forced their presence and their trade on China against her will; that their treaties were extorted by force, and their loans imposed by force, since they exacted from China what are ironically called "indemnities" which she could not pay except by borrowing from those who were robbing her. If Europeans could remember and realise these facts they would perhaps cease to complain that China continues to evade their demands by the only weapon of the weak—cunning. When you have knocked a man down, trampled on him, and picked his pocket, you can hardly expect him to enter into social relations with you merely because you pick him up and, retaining his property, propose that

you should now be friends and begin to do business. The obliquity of vision of the European residents on all these points is extraordinary. They cannot see that wrong has been done, and that wrong engenders wrong. They repeat comfortable formulæ about the duplicity and evasiveness of the Chinese; they charge them with dishonesty at the very moment that they are dismembering their country; they attach intolerable conditions to their loans, and then complain if their victims attempt to find accommodation elsewhere. Of all the Powers the United States alone have shown some generosity and fairness, and they are reaping their reward in the confidence of Young China. The Americans had the intelligence to devote some part of the excessive indemnity they exacted after the Boxer riots to educating Chinese students in America. Hundreds of these young men are now returned to China, with the friendliest feeling to America, and, naturally, anxious to develop political and commercial relations with her rather than with other Powers. British trade may suffer because British policy has been less generous. But British trade, I suppose, would suffer in any case. For the British continue to maintain their ignorance and contempt of China and all things Chinese, while Germans and Japanese are travelling and studying indefatigably all over the country. "We see too much of things Chinese!" was the amazing remark made to me by a business man in Shanghai. Too

much! They see nothing at all, and want to see nothing. They live in the treaty ports, dine, dance, play tennis, race. China is in birth-throes, and they know and care nothing. A future in China is hardly for them.

V

THE ENGLISHMAN ABROAD

To write from China about the Englishman may seem an odd choice. But to see him abroad is to see him afresh. At home he is the air one breathes, one is unaware of his qualities. Against a background of other races you suddenly perceive him, and can estimate him—fallaciously or no—as you estimate foreigners.

So seen the Englishman appears as the eternal schoolboy. I mean no insult; I mean to express his qualities as well as his defects. He has the pluck, the zest, the sense of fair play, the public spirit of our great schools. He has also their narrowness and their levity. Enter his office, and you will find him not hurried or worried, not scheming, skimping, or hustling, but cheery, genial, detached, with an air of playing at work. As likely as not, in a quarter of an hour he will have asked you round to the club and offered you a whisky and soda. Dine with him, and the talk will turn on golf or racing, on shooting, fishing, and the gymkhana. Or, if you wish to divert it, you must ask him definite questions about matters of fact. Pro-

bably you will get precise and intelligent replies. But if you put a general question he will flounder resentfully; and if you generalise yourself you will see him dismissing you as a windbag. Of the religion, the politics, the manners and customs of the country in which he lives he will know and care nothing, except so far as they may touch his affairs. He will never, if he can help it, leave the limits of the foreign settlement. Physically he oscillates between his home, his office, the club, and the racecourse; mentally, between his business and sport. On all general topics his opinions are second or third hand. They are the ghosts of old prejudices imported years ago from England, or taken up unexamined from the English community abroad. And these opinions pass from hand to hand till they are as similar as pebbles on the shore. In an hour or so you will have acquired the whole stock of ideas current in the foreign community throughout a continent. Your only hope of new light is in particular instances and illustrations. And these, of course, may be had for the asking.

But the Englishman abroad in some points is the Englishman at his best. For he is or has been a pioneer, at any rate in China. And pioneering brings out his most characteristic qualities. He loves to decide everything on his own judgment, on the spur of the moment, directly on the immediate fact, and in disregard of remoter contingencies and possibilities. He needs adven-

ture to bring out his powers, and only really takes to business when business is something of a "lark." To combine the functions of a trader with those of an explorer, a soldier, and a diplomat is what he really enjoys. So, all over the world, he opens the ways, and others come in to reap the fruit of his labours. This is true in things intellectual as in things practical. In science, too, he is a pioneer. Modern archæology was founded by English travellers. Darwin and Wallace and Galton in their youth pursued adventure as much as knowledge. When the era of routine arrives, when laboratory work succeeds to field work, the Englishman is apt to retire and leave the job to the German. The Englishman, one might say, "larks" into achievement, the German "grinds" into it. The one, accordingly, is free-living, genial, generous, careless; the other laborious, exact, routine-ridden. It is hard for an Englishman to be a pedant; it is not easy for a German to be anything else. For philosophy no man has less capacity than the Englishman. He does not understand even how such questions can be put, still less how anyone can pretend to answer them. The philosopher wants to know whether, how, and why life ought to be lived before he will consent to live it. The Englishman just lives ahead, not aware that there is a problem; or convinced that, if there is one, it will only be solved "by walking." The philosopher proceeds from the abstract to the concrete. The Englishman starts with

the concrete, and may or, more probably, may not arrive at the abstract. No general rules are of any use to him except such as he may have elaborated for himself out of his own experience. That is why he mistrusts education. For education teaches how to think in general, and that isn't what he wants or believes in. So, when he gets into affairs, he discards all his training and starts again at the beginning, learning to think, if he ever does learn it, over his own particular job. And his own way, he opines, must be the right way for every one. Hence his contempt and even indignation for individuals or nations who are moved by "ideas." At this moment his annoyance with the leaders of "Young China" is provoked largely by the fact that they are proceeding on general notions of how a nation should be governed and organised, instead of starting with the particularities of their own society, and trying to mend it piece by piece and from hand to mouth. Before they make a Constitution, he thinks, they ought to make roads; and before they draw up codes, to extirpate consumption. The conclusion lies near at hand, and I have heard it drawn—"What they want is a few centuries of British rule." And, indeed, it is curious how constantly the Englishman abroad is opposed, in the case of other nations, to all the institutions and principles he is supposed to be proud of at home. Partly, no doubt, this is due to his secret or avowed belief that the whole world ought to be governed despoti-

cally by the English. But partly it is because he does not believe that the results the English have achieved can be achieved in any other way than theirs. They arrived at them without intention or foresight, by a series of detached steps, each taken without prescience of the one that would follow. So, and so only, can other nations arrive at them. He does not believe in short cuts, nor in learning by the experience of others. And so the watchwords "Liberty," "Justice," "Constitution," so dear to him at home, leave him cold abroad. Or, rather, they make him very warm, but warm not with zeal but with irritation.

Never was such a pourer of cold water on other people's enthusiasms. He cannot endure the profession that a man is moved by high motives. His annoyance, for example, with the "anti-opium" movement is not due to the fact that he supports the importation into China of Indian opium. Very commonly he does not. But the movement is an "agitation" (dreadful word!). It is "got up" by missionaries. It purports to be based on moral grounds, and he suspects everything that so purports. Not that he is not himself moved by moral considerations. Almost invariably he is. But he will never admit it for himself, and he deeply suspects it in others. The words "hypocrite," "humbug," "sentimentalist" spring readily to his lips. But let him work off his steam, sit quiet and wait, and you will find, often enough, that he has arrived at the same

conclusion as the "*sentimentalist*"—*only*, of course, for quite different reasons! For intellect he has little use, except so far as it issues in practical results. He will forgive a man for being intelligent if he makes a fortune, but hardly otherwise. Still, he has a queer, half-contemptuous admiration for a definite intellectual accomplishment which he knows it is hard to acquire and is not sure he could acquire himself. That, for instance, is his attitude to those who know Chinese. A "sinologue," he will tell you, must be an imbecile, for no one but a fool would give so much time to a study so unprofitable. Still, in a way, he is proud of the sinologue—as a public school is proud of a boy so clever as to verge upon insanity, or a village is proud of the village idiot. Something of the same feeling, I sometimes think, underlies his respect for Shakspere. "If you want that kind of thing," he seems to say to the foreigner, "and it's the kind of thing you *would* want, *we* can do it, you see, better than you can!"

So with art. He is never a connoisseur, but he is often a collector. Partly, no doubt, because there is money in it, but that is a secondary consideration. Mainly because collecting and collectors appeal to his sporting instinct. His knowledge about his collection will be precise and definite, whether it be postage stamps or pictures. He will know all about it, except its æsthetic value. That he cannot know, for he cannot see it. He has the *flair* of the dealer, not the perception

of the amateur. *And he does not know or believe that* there is any distinction between them.

But these, from his point of view, are trifles. What matters is that he has pre-eminently the virtues of active life. He is fair-minded, and this, oddly, in spite of his difficulty in seeing another man's point of view. When he *does* see it he respects it. Whereas nimbler-witted nations see it only to circumvent and cheat it. He is honest; as honest, at least, as the conditions of modern business permit. He hates bad work, even when, for the moment, bad work pays. He hates skimping and paring. And these qualities of his make it hard for him to compete with rivals less scrupulous and less generous. He is kind-hearted—much more so than he cares to admit. And at the bottom of all his qualities he has the sense of duty. He will shoulder loyally all the obligations he has undertaken to his country, to his family, to his employer, to his employees. The sense of duty, indeed, one might say with truth, is his religion. For on the rare occasions on which he can be persuaded to broach such themes you will find, I think, at the bottom of his mind that what he believes in is Something, somehow, somewhere, in the universe, which helps him, and which he is helping, when he does right. There must, he feels, be some sense in life. And what sense would there be if duty were nonsense?

Poets, artists, philosophers can never be at home with the Englishman. His qualities and his defects

alike are alien to them. In his company they live as in prison, for it is not an air in which wings can soar. But for solid walking on the ground he has not his equal. The phrase " Solvitur ambulando " must surely have been coined for him. And no doubt on his road he has passed, and will pass again, the wrecks of many a flying-machine.

VI

CHINA IN TRANSITION

THE Chinese Revolution has proceeded, so far, with less disturbance and bloodshed than any great revolution known to history. There has been little serious fighting and little serious disorder; nothing comparable to that which accompanied, for instance, the French Revolution of 1789. And this, no doubt, is due to the fact that the Chinese are alone among nations of the earth in detesting violence and cultivating reason. Their instinct is always to compromise and save everybody's face. And this is the main reason why Westerners despise them. The Chinese, they aver, have "no guts." And when hard pressed as to the policy of the Western Powers in China, they will sometimes quite frankly confess that they consider the West has benefited China by teaching her the use of force. That this should be the main contribution of Christian to Pagan civilisation is one of the ironies of history. But it is part of the greater irony which gave the Christian faith to precisely those nations whose fundamental instincts and convictions were and are in radical antagonism to its teaching.

Though, however, it is broadly true that the Chinese have relied on reason and justice in a way and to a degree which is inconceivable in the West, they have not been without their share of original sin. Violence, anarchy, and corruption have played a part in their history, though a less part than in the history of most countries. And these forces have been specially evident in that department to which Westerners are apt to pay the greatest attention — in the department of government. Government has always been less important in China than in the Western world; it has always been rudimentary in its organisation; and for centuries it has been incompetent and corrupt. Of this corruption Westerners, it is true, make more than they fairly should. China is no more corrupt (to say the least) than the United States or Italy or France, or than England was in the eighteenth century. And much that is called corruption is recognised and established "squeeze," necessary, and understood to be necessary, to supplement the inadequate salaries of officials. A Chinese official is corrupt much as Lord Chancellor Bacon was corrupt; and whether the Chancellor ought properly to be called corrupt is still matter of controversy. Moreover, the people have always had their remedy. When the recognised "squeeze" is exceeded, they protest by riot. So that the Chinese system, in the most unfavourable view, may be described as corruption tempered by anarchy.

And this system, it is admitted, still prevails after the Revolution. Clearly, indeed, it cannot be extirpated until officials are properly paid; and China is not in a position to pay for any reform while the Powers are drawing away an enormous percentage of her resources by that particular form of robbery called by diplomatists "indemnity." The new officials, then, are "corrupt" as the old ones were; and they are something more. They are Jacobins. Educated abroad, they are as full of ideas as was Robespierre or St. Just; and their ideas are even more divorced from sentiment and tradition. A foreign education seems to make a cut right across a Chinaman's life. He returns with a new head; and this head never gets into normal relations with his heart. That, I believe, is the essence of Jacobinism, ideas working with enormous rapidity and freedom unchecked by the fly-wheel of traditional feelings. And it is Jacobinism that accounts for the extraordinary vigour of the campaign against opium. Many Europeans still endeavour to maintain that this campaign is not serious. But that is because Europeans simply cannot conceive that any body of men should be in as deadly earnest about a moral issue as are the representatives of Young China. The anti-opium campaign is not only serious, it is ruthless. Smokers are flogged and executed; poppy is rooted up; and farmers who resist are shot down. The other day in Hunan, it is credibly reported, some seventy farmers who had

protested against the destruction of their crops were locked into a temple and burnt alive. An old man of seventy-six, falsely accused of growing poppy, was fined 500 dollars, and when he refused to pay was flogged to death by the orders of a young official of twenty-two. Stories of this kind come in from every part of the country; and though this or that story may be untrue or exaggerated, there can be no doubt about the general state of affairs. The officials are putting down opium with a vigour and a determination which it is inconceivable should ever be applied in the West to the traffic in alcohol. But in doing so they are showing a ruthlessness which does not seem to be native to the Chinese, and which perhaps is to be accounted for by what I have called Jacobinism, resulting from the effects of a Western education that has been unable to penetrate harmoniously the complicated structure of Chinese character.

The anti-opium campaign is one example of the way in which the Revolution has elicited and intensified violence in this peace-loving people. Another example is the use of assassination. This has been an accompaniment of all great revolutions. It took the form of "proscriptions" in Rome, of the revolutionary tribunals in France. In China it is by comparison a negligible factor; but it exists. Two months ago a prominent leader of the southern party was assassinated; and popular suspicion traces the murder to high

Government officials, and even to the President himself. The other day a southern general was killed by a bomb. For the manufacture of bombs is one of the things China has learned from the Christian West; and the President lives in constant terror of this form of murder. China, it will be seen, does not altogether escape the violence that accompanies all revolutions. Nor does she altogether escape the anarchy. Anarchy, indeed, that is a simple strike against authority, may be said to be part of the Chinese system. It is the way they have always enforced their notions of justice. A curious example has been recently offered by the students of the Pekin University. For various reasons—good or bad—they have objected to the conduct of their Chancellor. After ineffectual protests, they called upon him in large numbers with his resignation written out, and requested him to sign it. He refused; whereupon they remarked that they would call again the next day with revolvers; and in the interval he saw wisdom and signed. Last week there was a similar episode. The new Chancellor proved as unpalatable as his predecessor. The students once more presented themselves with his resignation written out. He refused to resign, and, as the students aver, scurrilously abused them. They proceeded to the Minister of Education, who refused to see them. Thereupon they camped out in his courtyard, and stayed all day and all night, sending a message to the professors dated "from under

the trees of the Education Office," to explain that they were unfortunately unable to attend lectures. This Chancellor, too, it would seem, has seen wisdom and resigned.

How strange it all seems to Western eyes! A country, we should suppose, where such things occur, is incapable of organisation. But it is certain that we are wrong. Our notion is that everything must be done by authority, and that unless authority is maintained there will be anarchy. The Chinese notion is that authority is there to carry out what the people recognise to be common sense and justice; if it does otherwise, it must be resisted; and if it disappears life will still go on—as it is going on now in the greater part of China—on the basis of the traditional and essentially reasonable routine. Almost certainly the students of the University had justice on their side; otherwise such action would not be taken; and when they get justice they will be more docile and orderly than our own undergraduates at home.

Another thing surprising to European observers is the apparent belief of the Chinese in verbal remonstrance. Under the present régime officials and public men are allowed the free use of the telegraph. The consequence is that telegrams of advice, admonition, approval, blame, fear, hope, doubt pour in daily to the Government from civil and military governors, from members of Parliament and party leaders. In the

paper to-day, for example, is a telegram from the Governors of seventeen provinces addressed to the National Assembly. It begins as follows:

"To the President, the Cabinet, the Tsan Yi Yuan, the Chung Yi Yuan, and the Press Association,—When the revolution took place at Wuchang, the various societies and groups responded, and when the Republic was inaugurated the troops raised among these bodies were gradually disbanded. For fear that, being driven by hunger, these disbanded soldiers would become a menace to the place, the various societies and groups have established a society at Shanghai called the Citizens' Progressive Society, to promote the means of livelihood for the people, and the advancement of society, and the establishment has been registered in the offices of the Tutuhs of the provinces."

Then follows a statement of the "six dangers" to which the country is exposed, an appeal to the Assembly to act more reasonably and competently, and then the following peroration:

"The declarations of us, Yuan-hung and others, are still there, our wounds have not yet been fully recovered, and should the sea and ocean be dried up, our original hearts will not be changed. We will protect the Republic with our sinews and blood of brass and iron, we will take the lead of the province, and be their backbone,

and we will not allow the revival of the monarchy and the suppression of the powers of the people. Let Heaven and earth be witness to our words. You gentlemen are pillars of the political parties, or the representatives of the people, and you should unite together and not become inconsistent. You first determined that the Loan is necessary, but such opinion is now changed, and you now reject the Loan. Can the ice be changed into red coal in your hearts? Thus even those who love and admire you will not be able to defend your position. However, if you have any extraordinary plan or suggestion to save the present situation, you can show it to us."

Some of the strange effect produced by this document is due, no doubt, to translation. But it, like the many others of the kind I have read, seems to indicate what is at the root of the Chinese attitude to life—a belief in the power of reason and persuasion. I have said enough to show that this attitude does not exclude the use of violence; but I feel sure that it limits it far more than it has ever been limited in Europe. Even in time of revolution the Chinese are peaceable and orderly to an extent unknown and almost unbelievable in the West. And the one thing the West is teaching them and priding itself on teaching them is the absurdity of this attitude. Well, one day it is the West that will repent because China has learnt the lesson too well.

VII

A SACRED MOUNTAIN

IT was midnight when the train set us down at Tai-an-fu. The moon was full. We passed across fields, through deserted alleys where sleepers lay naked on the ground, under a great gate in a great wall, by halls and pavilions, by shimmering tree-shadowed spaces, up and down steps, and into a court where cypresses grew. We set up our beds in a verandah, and woke to see leaves against the morning sky. We explored the vast temple and its monuments—iron vessels of the Tang age, a great tablet of the Sungs, trees said to date from before the Christian era, stones inscribed with drawings of these by the Emperor Chien Lung, hall after hall, court after court, ruinous, overgrown, and the great crumbling walls and gates and towers. Then in the afternoon we began the ascent of Tai Shan, the most sacred mountain in China, the most frequented, perhaps, in the world. There, according to tradition, legendary emperors worshipped God. Confucius climbed it six centuries before Christ, and sighed, we are told, to find his native State so small.

The great Chin-Shih-Huang was there in the third century B.C. Chien Lung in the eighteenth century covered it with inscriptions. And millions of humble pilgrims for thirty centuries at least have toiled up the steep and narrow way. Steep it is, for it makes no détours, but follows straight up the bed of a stream, and the greater part of the five thousand feet is ascended by stone steps. A great ladder of eighteen flights climbs the last ravine, and to see it from below, sinuously mounting the precipitous face to the great arch that leads on to the summit, is enough to daunt the most ardent walker. We at least were glad to be chaired some part of the way. A wonderful way! On the lower slopes it passes from portal to portal, from temple to temple. Meadows shaded with aspen and willow border the stream as it falls from green pool to green pool. Higher up are scattered pines Else the rocks are bare —bare, but very beautiful, with that significance of form which I have found everywhere in the mountains in China.

To such beauty the Chinese are peculiarly sensitive. All the way up the rocks are carved with inscriptions recording the charm and the sanctity of the place. Some of them were written by emperors; many, especially, by Chien Lung, the great patron of art in the eighteenth century. They are models, one is told, of caligraphy as well as of literary composition. Indeed, according to Chinese standards, they could not be the one without the other. The very names of favourite spots are poems in

themselves. One is "the pavilion of the phœnixes"; another "the fountain of the white cranes." A rock is called "the tower of the quickening spirit"; the gate on the summit is "the portal of the clouds." More prosaic, but not less charming, is an inscription on a rock in the plain, "the place of the three smiles," because there some mandarins, meeting to drink and converse, told three peculiarly funny stories. Is not that delightful? It seems so to me. And so peculiarly Chinese!

It was dark before we reached the summit. We put up in the temple that crowns it, dedicated to Yü Huang, the "Jade Emperor" of the Taoists; and his image and those of his attendant deities watched our slumbers. But we did not sleep till we had seen the moon rise, a great orange disc, straight from the plain, and swiftly mount till she made the river, five thousand feet below, a silver streak in the dim grey levels.

Next morning, at sunrise, we saw that, north and east, range after range of lower hills stretched to the horizon, while south lay the plain, with half a hundred streams gleaming down to the river from the valleys. Full in view was the hill where, more than a thousand years ago, the great Tang poet Li-tai-po retired with five companions to drink and make verses. They are still known to tradition as the "six idlers of the bamboo grove"; and the morning sun, I half thought, still shines upon their symposium. We spent the day on the mountain; and as the hours passed by, more and more it showed

itself to be a sacred place. Sacred to what god? No question is harder to answer of any sacred place, for there are as many ideas of the god as there are worshippers. There are temples here to various gods: to the mountain himself; to the Lady of the mountain, Pi-hsia-yüen, who is at once the Venus of Lucretius—"goddess of procreation, gold as the clouds, blue as the sky," one inscription calls her—and the kindly mother who gives children to women and heals the little ones of their ailments; to the Great Bear; to the Green Emperor, who clothes the trees with leaves; to the Cloud-compeller; to many others. And in all this, is there no room for God? It is a poor imagination that would think so. When men worship the mountain, do they worship a rock, or the spirit of the place, or the spirit that has no place? It is the latter, we may be sure, that some men adored, standing at sunrise on this spot. And the Jade Emperor—is he a mere idol? In the temple where we slept were three inscriptions set up by the Emperor Chien Lung. They run as follows:—

"Without labour, oh Lord, Thou bringest forth the greatest things."

"Thou leadest Thy company of spirits to guard the whole world."

"In the company of Thy spirits Thou art wise as a mighty Lord to achieve great works."

These might be sentences from the Psalms; they are as religious as anything Hebraic. And if it be retorted

that the mass of the worshippers on Tai Shan are superstitious, so are, and always have been, the mass of worshippers anywhere. Those who rise to religion in any country are few. India, I suspect, is the great exception. But I do not know that they are fewer in China than elsewhere. For that form of religion, indeed, which consists in the worship of natural beauty and what lies behind it—for the religion of a Wordsworth—they seem to be pre-eminently gifted. The cult of this mountain, and of the many others like it in China, the choice of sites for temples and monasteries, the inscriptions, the little pavilions set up where the view is loveliest—all goes to prove this. In England we have lovelier hills, perhaps, than any in China. But where is our sacred mountain? Where, in all the country, that charming mythology which once in Greece and Italy, as now in China, was the outward expression of the love of nature?

"Great God, I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn."

That passionate cry of a poet born into a naked world would never have been wrung from him had he been born in China.

And that leads me to one closing reflection. When lovers of China—"pro-Chinese," as they are contemptuously called in the East—assert that China is more

civilised than the modern West, even the candid Westerner, who is imperfectly acquainted with the facts, is apt to suspect insincere paradox. Perhaps these few notes on Tai Shan may help to make the matter clearer. A people that can so consecrate a place of natural beauty is a people of fine feeling for the essential values of life. That they should also be dirty, disorganised, corrupt, incompetent, even if it were true—and it is far from being true in any unqualified sense—would be irrelevant to this issue. On a foundation of inadequate material prosperity they reared, centuries ago, the superstructure of a great culture. The West, in rebuilding its foundations, has gone far to destroy the superstructure. Western civilisation, wherever it penetrates, brings with it water-taps, sewers, and police; but it brings also an ugliness, an insincerity, a vulgarity never before known to history, unless it be under the Roman Empire. It is terrible to see in China the first wave of this Western flood flinging along the coasts and rivers and railway lines its scrofulous foam of advertisements, of corrugated iron roofs, of vulgar, meaningless architectural forms. In China, as in all old civilisations I have seen, all the building of man harmonises with and adorns nature. In the West everything now built is a blot. Many men, I know, sincerely think that this destruction of beauty is a small matter, and that only decadent æsthetes would pay any attention to it in a world so much in need of sewers and hospitals. I believe this view to

be profoundly mistaken. The ugliness of the West is a symptom of a disease of the Soul. It implies that the end has been lost sight of in the means. In China the opposite is the case. The end is clear, though the means be inadequate. Consider what the Chinese have done to Tai Shan, and what the West will shortly do, once the stream of Western tourists begins to flow strongly. Where the Chinese have constructed a winding stairway of stone, beautiful from all points of view, Europeans or Americans will run up a funicular railway, a staring scar that will never heal. Where the Chinese have written poems in exquisite caligraphy, *they* will cover the rocks with advertisements. Where the Chinese have built a series of temples, each so designed and placed as to be a new beauty in the landscape, *they* will run up restaurants and hotels like so many scabs on the face of nature. I say with confidence that they *will*, because they *have* done it wherever there is any chance of a paying investment. Well, the Chinese need, I agree, our science, our organisation, our medicine. But is it affectation to think they may have to pay too high a price for it, and to suggest that in acquiring our material advantages they may lose what we have gone near to lose, that fine and sensitive culture which is one of the forms of spiritual life? The West talks of civilising China. Would that China could civilise the West!

PART III

JAPAN

I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN

JAPAN, surely, must be a mirage created by enchantment. Nothing so beautiful could be real. Take the west coast of Scotland, bathe it in Mediterranean light and sun, and let its waves be those of the Pacific. Take the best of Devonshire, enlarge the hills, extend the plains, and dominate all with the only perfect mountain in the world—a mountain that catches at your breath like a masterpiece of art. Make the copses woods, and the woods forests. For our fields with their hedgerows substitute the vivid green of rice, shining across the gleam of flooded plains. Everywhere let water flow; and at every waterfall and cave erect a little shrine to hallow the spot. Over the whole pour a flood of pure white light, and you have a faint image of Japan. Perhaps it is not, naturally, more beautiful than the British Isles—few countries are. But it is unspoilt by man, or almost so. Osaka, indeed, is as ugly as Manchester, Yokohama as Liverpool. But these are small blots. For the rest, Japan is Japan of the Middle Ages, and lovely as England may have been, when England could still be called merry.

And the people are lovely, too. I do not speak of facial beauty. Some may think, in that respect, the English or the Americans handsomer. But these people have the beauty of life. Instead of the tombstone masques that pass for faces among Anglo-Saxons, they have human features, quick, responsive, mobile. Instead of the slow, long limbs creaking in stiff integuments, they have active members, for the most bare or moving freely in loose robes. Instead of a mumbled, monotonous, machine-like emission of sound they have real speech, vivacious, varied, musical. Their children are the loveliest in the world; so gay, so sturdy, so cheeky, yet never rude. It is a pure happiness merely to walk in the streets and look at them. It is a pure happiness, I might almost say, to look at anyone, so gay is their greeting, so radiant their smile, so full of vitality their gestures. I do not know what they think of the foreigner, but at least they betray no animosity. They let his stiff, ungainly presence move among them unchallenged. Perhaps they are sorry for him; but I think they are never rude. I am speaking, of course, of Old Japan, of the Japan that is all in evidence, if one lands, as I did, in the south, avoids Osaka, and postpones Yokohama and Tokio. It is still the Japan of feudalism; a system in which I, for my part, do not believe; which, in its essence, in Japan as in Europe, was harsh, unjust, and cruel; but which had the art of fostering, or at least of not destroying beauty.

And in this point feudalism in Japan was finer and more sensitive, if it was less grandiose, than feudalism in Europe. There is nothing in Japan to compare with the churches and cathedrals of the West, for there is no stone architecture at all. But there is nothing in the West to compare with the living-rooms of Japan. Suites of these dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are to be seen in Kyoto and elsewhere. And till I saw them I had no idea how exquisite human life might be made. The Japanese, as is well known, discovered the secret of emptiness. Their rooms consist of a floor of spotless matting, paper walls, and a wooden roof. But the paper walls, in these old palatial rooms, are masterpieces by great artists. From a background of gold-leaf emerge and fade away suggestions of river and coast and hill, of peonies, chrysanthemums, lotuses, of wild geese and swans, of reeds and pools, of all that is elusive and choice in nature; decorations that are also lyric poems, hints of landscape that yet never pretend to be a substitute for the real thing. The real thing is outside, and perhaps it will not intrude; for where we should have glass windows the Japanese have white paper screens. But draw back, if you choose, one of these screens, and you will see a little landscape garden, a little lake, a little bridge, a tiny rockery, a few goldfish, a cluster of irises, a bed of lotus, and, above and beyond, the great woods. These are royal apartments;

but all the cost, it will be seen, is lavished on the work of art. The principle is the same in humbler homes.

People who could so devise life, we may be sure, are people with a fineness of perception unknown to the West, unless it were once in ancient Greece. The Japanese indeed, I suspect, are the Greeks of the East. In the theatre at Kyoto this was curiously borne in upon me. On the floor of the house reclined figures in loose robes, bare-necked and barefooted. On the narrow stage were one or two actors, chanting in measured speech, and moving slowly from pose to pose. From boxes on either side of the stage intoned a kind of chorus; and a flute and pizzicato strings accompanied the whole in the solemn strains of some ancient mode. I have seen nothing so like what a Greek play may have been, though doubtless even this was far enough away. And still more was I struck by the resemblance when a comedy succeeded to the tragedy, and I found the young and old Japan confronting one another exactly as the young and old Athens met in debate, two thousand years ago, in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes. The theme was an ascent of Mount Fuji; the actors two groups of young girls, one costumed as virgin priestesses of the Shinto cult, the other in modern European dress. The one set were climbing the mountain as a pilgrimage, the other as a lark;

and they meet and exchange sharp dialectics (unintelligible to me, but not unguessable) on the lower slopes. The sympathies of the author, like those of Aristophanes, were with the old school. It is the pilgrims who reach the top and the modern young women who collapse. And the modern young man fares no better; he is beaten by a coolie and frightened by a ghost. The playwright had at least Aristophanes' gift of lampoon, though I doubt whether he had a touch of his genius. Perhaps, however, he had a better cause. For, I doubt, modern Japan may deserve lampooning more than the Athens of Aristophanes. For modern Japan is the modern West. And that—well, it seemed to be symbolised to me yesterday in the train. In my carriage were two Japanese. One was loosely wrapt in a kimono, bare throat and feet, fine features, fine gestures, everything aristocratic and distinguished. The other was clad in European dress, sprigged waistcoat, gold watch-chain, a coarse, thick-lipped face, a podgy figure. It was a hot July day, and we were passing through some of the loveliest scenery in the world. He first closed all doors and windows, and then extended himself at full length and went to sleep. There he lay, his great paunch sagging—prosperity exuding from every pore—an emblem and type of what in the West we call a "successful" man. And the other? The other, no doubt, was going downhill. Both, of course, were

Japanese types; but the civilisation of the West chose the one and rejected the other. And if civilisation is to be judged, as it fairly may be, by the kind of men it brings to the top, there is much to be said for the point of view of my Tory playwright.

II

A "NO" DANCE

On entering the theatre I was invaded by a sense of serenity and peace. There was no ornament, no upholstery, no superfluity at all. A square building of unvarnished wood; a floor covered with matting, exquisitely clean, and divided into little boxes, or rather trays (so low were the partitions), in which the audience knelt on their heels, beautiful in loose robes; running out from the back wall a square stage, with a roof supported by pillars; a passage on the same level, by which the actors entered, on the left; the screens removed from the outer walls, so that the hall was open to the air, and one looked out on sky and trees, or later on darkness, against which shone a few painted lanterns. Compare this with the Queen's Hall in London, or with any of our theatres, and realise the effect on one's mood of the mere setting of the drama. Drama was it? Or opera? Or what? It is called a "dance." But there was very little dancing. What mainly remains in my mind is a series of visual images, one more beautiful than another; figures

seated motionless for minutes, almost for half-hours, with a stillness of statues, not an eyelash shaking; or passing very slowly across the stage, with that movement of bringing one foot up to the other and pausing before the next step which is so ridiculous in our opera, but was here so right and so impressive; or turning slowly, or rising and sitting with immense deliberation; each figure right in its relation to the stage and to the others. All were clothed in stiff brocade, sumptuous but not gorgeous. One or two were masked; and all of them, I felt, ought to have been. The mask, in fact, the use of which in Greek drama I had always felt to be so questionable, was here triumphantly justified. It completed the repudiation of actuality which was the essence of the effect. It was a musical sound, as it were, made visible. It symbolised humanity, but it was not human, still less inhuman. I would rather call it divine. And this whole art of movement and costume required that completion. Once I had seen a mask I missed it in all the characters that were without it.

To me, then, this visual spectacle was the essence of the "No" dance. The dancing itself, when it came, was but a slight intensification of the slow and solemn posing I have described. There was no violence, no leaping, no quick steps; rather a turning and bending, a slow sweep of the arm, a walking a little more rhythmical, on the verge, at most, of running. It was never ex-

citing, but I could not say it was never passionate. It seemed to express a kind of frozen or petrified passion; rather, perhaps, a passion run into a mould of beauty and turned out a statue. I have never seen an art of such reserve and such distinction. "Or of such tediousness," I seem to hear an impatient reader exclaim. Well, let me be frank. Like all Westerners, I am accustomed to life in quick time, and to an art full of episode, of intellectual content, of rapid change and rapid development. I have lost to a great extent that power of prolonging an emotion which seems to be the secret of Eastern art. I am bored—subconsciously, as it were—where an Oriental is lulled into ecstasy. His case is the better. But also, in this matter of the No dance he has me at a disadvantage. In the first place he can understand the words. These, it is true, have far less importance than in a drama of Shakspere. They are only a lyric or narrative accompaniment to the music and the dance. Still they have, one is informed, a beauty much appreciated by Japanese, and one that the stranger, ignorant of the language, misses. And secondly, what is worse, the music failed to move me. Whether this is my own fault, or that of the music, I do not presume to decide, for I do not know whether, as so often is the case, I was defeated by a convention unfamiliar to me, or whether the convention has really become formal and artificial. In any case, after the first shock of interest, I found the music monotonous. It was

solemn and religious in character, and reminded me more of Gregorian chants than of anything else. But it had one curious feature which seemed rather to be primitive and orgiastic. The two musicians who played the drums accompanied the performers, almost unceasingly, by a kind of musical ejaculation, starting on a low note and swooping up to a high, long-held falsetto cry. This over and over again, through the dialogue and through the singing. The object, I suppose, and perhaps, to Japanese, the effect, is to sustain a high emotional tone. In my case it failed, as the music generally failed. My interest, as I began by saying, was maintained by the visual beauty ; and that must have been very great to be able to maintain itself independently of the words and the music.

As to the drama, it is not drama at all in the sense in which we have come to understand the term in the West. There is no "construction," no knot tied and untied, no character. Rather there is a succession of scenes selected from a well-known story for some quality of poignancy, or merely of narrative interest. The form, I think, should be called epic or lyric rather than dramatic. And it is in this point that it most obviously differs from the Greek drama. It has no intellectual content, or very little. And, perhaps for that reason, it has had no development, but remains fossilised where it was in the fifteenth century. On the other hand, these actors, I felt, are the only ones who could act

Greek drama. They have, I think, quite clearly the same tradition and aim as the Greeks. They desire not to reproduce but to symbolise actuality ; and their conception of acting is the very opposite of ours. The last thing they aim at is to be "natural." To be unnatural rather is their object. Hence the costume, hence the mask, hence the movement and gesture. And how effective such "unnaturalness" can be in evoking natural passion only those will understand who have realised how ineffective for that purpose is our "naturalness" when we are concerned with Sophocles or Shakspere. The Japanese have in their No dance a great treasure. For out of it they might, if they have the genius, develop a modern poetic drama. How thankful would hundreds of young men be, starving for poetry in England, if we had as a living tradition anything analogous to work upon !

III

NIKKO

WAKING in the night, I heard the sound of running water. Across my window I saw, stretching dimly, the branch of a pine, and behind it shone the stars. I remembered that I was in Japan and felt that all the essence of it was there. Running water, pine trees, sun and moon and stars. All their life, as all their art, seems to be a mood of these. For to them their life and their art are inseparable. The art is not an accomplishment, an ornament, an excrescence. It is the flower of the plant. Some men, some families of men, feeling beauty as every one felt it, had the power also to express it. Or perhaps I should say—it is the Japanese view—to suggest it. To them the branch of a tree stands for a forest, a white disk on gold for night and the moon, a quivering reed for a river, a bamboo stalk for a grove. Their painters are poets. By passionate observation they have learnt what expression of the part most inevitably symbolises the whole. That they give; and their admirers, trained like them in feeling, fill in the rest.

This art presupposes, what it has always had, a public not less sensitive than the artist; a similar mood, a similar tradition, a similar culture. Feel as they do, and you must create as they do, or at least appreciate their creations.

It was with this in my mind that I wandered about this exquisite place, where Man has made a lovely nature lovelier still. More even than by the famous and sumptuous temples I was moved by the smaller and humbler shrines, so caressing are they of every choice spot, so expressive, not of princely, but of popular feeling. Here is one, for instance, standing under a cliff beside a stream, where women offer bits of wood in the faith that so they will be helped to pass safely through the pangs of childbirth. Here in a ravine is another where men who want to develop their calves hang up sandals to a once athletic saint. "The Lord," our Scripture says, "delighteth not in any man's legs." How pleasant, then, it must be to have a saint who does! Especially for the Japanese, whose legs are so finely made, and who display them so delightfully. Such, all over the world, is the religion of the people, when they have any religion at all. And how human it is, and how much nearer to life than the austerities and abstractions of a creed!

Hour after hour I strolled through these lovely places, so beautifully ordered that the authorities, one feels, must themselves delight in the nature they con-

trol. I had proof of it, I thought, in a notice which ran as follows:

"FAMOUS TAKINO TEMPLE STANDS NOT FAR AWAY, AND SOMEN FALL TOO. IT IS WORTH WHILE TO BE THERE ONCE."

It is indeed, and many times! But can you imagine a rural council in England breaking into this personal note? And how reserved! Almost like Japanese art. Compare the invitation I once saw in Switzerland, to visit "das schönste Schwärm- und Aussichtspunkt des ganzen Schweitzerischen Reichs." There speaks the advertiser. But beside the Somen Fall there was no restaurant.

Northerners, and Anglo-Saxons in particular, have always at the back of their minds a notion that there is something effeminate about the sense for beauty. That is reserved for decadent Southern nations. *Tu regere imperio populos, Romane memento* they would say, if they knew the tag; and translate it "Britain rules the waves"! But history gives the lie to this complacent theory. No nations were ever more virile than the Greeks or the Italians. They have left a mark on the world which will endure when Anglo-Saxon civilisation is forgotten. And none have been, or are, more virile than the Japanese. That they have the delicacy of women, too, does not alter the fact. The Russian War proved it, if proof so tragic were required;

and so does all their mediæval history. Japanese feudalism was as bloody, as ruthless, as hard as European. It was even more gallant, stoical, loyal. But it had something else which I think Europe missed, unless it were once in Provence. It had in the midst of its hardness a consciousness of the pathos of life, of its beauty, its brevity, its inexplicable pain. I think in no other country has anything arisen analogous to the Zen sect of Buddhism, when knights withdrew from battle to a garden and summerhouse, exquisitely ordered to symbolise the spiritual life, and there, over a cup of tea served with an elaborate ritual, looking out on a lovely nature, entered into mystic communion with the spirit of beauty which was also the spirit of life. From that communion, with that mood about them, they passed out to kill or to die—to die, it might be, by their own hand, by a process which I think no Western man can bear even to think of, much less conceive himself as imitating.

This sense at once of the beauty and of the tragedy of life, this power of appreciating the one and dominating the other, seems to be the essence of the Japanese character. In this place, it will be remembered, is the tomb of Iyeyasu, the greatest statesman Japan has produced. Appropriately, after his battles and his labours, he sleeps under the shade of trees, surrounded by chapels and oratories more sumptuous and superb than anything else in Japan, approached for miles and

miles by a road lined on either side with giant cryptomerias. His spirit, if it could know, would appreciate, we may be sure, this habitation of beauty. For these men, ruthless as they were, were none the less sensitive. For example, the traveller is shown (in Kyoto, I think) a little pavilion in a garden where Hideyoshi used to sit and contemplate the moon. I believe it. I think Iyeyasu did the same. And also he wrote this, on a roll here preserved :

"Life is like unto a long journey with a heavy load. Let thy steps be slow and steady, that thou stumble not. Persuade thyself that privations are the natural lot of mortals, and there will be no room for discontent, neither for despair. When ambitious desires arise in thy heart, recall the days of extremity thou hast passed through. Forbearance is the root of quietness and assurance for ever. Look upon wrath as thy enemy. If thou knowest only what it is to conquer, and knowest not what it is to be defeated, woe unto thee! It will fare ill with thee. Find fault with thyself rather than with others. Better the less than the more."

Marcus Aurelius might have said that. But Marcus Aurelius belonged to a race peculiarly insensitive to beauty. The Japanese stoics were also artists and poets. Their earliest painters were feudal lords, and it was feudal lords who fostered and acted the No dances. If Nietzsche had known Japan—I think he did not ?—

he would surely have found in these Daimyos and Samurai the forerunners of his Superman. A blood-red blossom growing out of the battlefield, that, I think, was his ideal. It is one which, I hope, the world has outlived. I look for the lily flowering over the fields of peace.

IV

DIVINE RIGHT IN JAPAN

WHEN Japan was opened to the West, after more than two centuries of seclusion, she was in possession of a national spirit which had been enabled, by isolation, to become and remain simple and homogeneous. All public feeling, all public morals centred about the divinity of the Emperor ; an idea which, by a process unique in history, had hibernated through centuries of political obscuration, and emerged again to the light with its prestige unimpaired in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the Emperor, one may say, Japan was incarnate. And to this faith the Japanese, as well as foreign observers, attribute their great achievement in the Russian War. The little book of Captain Sakurai, *Human Bullets,* testifies to this fact in every sentence : " Through the abundant grace of Heaven and the illustrious virtue of his Majesty, the Imperial forces defeated the great enemy both on land and sea." . . . " I jumped out of bed, cleansed my person with pure water, donned my best uniform, bowed to the East where the great Sire resides, solemnly

read his proclamation of war, and told his Majesty that his humble subject was just starting to the front. When I offered my last prayers—the last I then believed they were—before the family shrine of my ancestors I felt a thrill going all through me, as if they were giving me a solemn injunction, saying: 'Thou art not thy own. For his Majesty's sake, thou shalt go to save the nation from calamity, ready to bear the crushing of thy bones and the tearing of thy flesh. Disgrace not thy ancestors by an act of cowardice.'" This, it is clear, is an attitude quite different from that of an Englishman towards the King. The King, to us, is at most a symbol. The Emperor, to the Japanese, is, or was, a god. And the difference may be noted in small matters. For instance, a Japanese, writing from England, observes with astonishment that we put the head of the King on our stamps and cover it with postmarks. That, to a Japanese, seems to be blasphemy. Again, he is puzzled, at the Coronation in Westminster Abbey, to find the people looking down from above on the King. That, again, seems to him blasphemy. Last year, when the Emperor was dying, crowds knelt hour after hour, day and night, on the road beside the palace praying for him. And a photographer who took a picture of them by flashlight was literally torn to pieces. One could multiply examples, but the thing is plain. The national spirit of Japan centres about the divinity of the Emperor. And precisely therein

lies their present problem. For one may say, I think, with confidence that this attitude cannot endure, and is already disappearing. Western thought is an irresistible solvent of all irrational and instinctive ideas. Men cannot be engineers and pathologists and at the same time believe that a man is a god. They cannot be historians and at the same time believe that their first Emperor came down from heaven. Above all, they cannot be politicians and abstain from analysing the real source and sanction of political power. English political experience, it is true, suggests immense possibilities in the way of clinging to fictions with the feelings while insisting upon facts in practice. And the famous verse:

> " But I was thinking of a plan
> To dye my whiskers green,
> And always wear so large a fan
> That they should not be seen,"

might have been written to summarise the development of the British Constitution. But the success of that method depends upon the condition that the fictions shall be nothing *but* fictions. The feelings of the English can centre about the King only because they are well assured that he does not and will not govern. But that condition does not exist in Japan. The Japanese Constitution is conceived on the German, not the English, model; and it bristles with clauses which are intended to prevent the development which has taken

place in England—the shifting of power from the Sovereign to a Parliamentary majority. The Ministers are the Emperor's Ministers; the policy is the Emperor's policy. That is the whole tenour of the Constitution. No Constitution, it is true, can "trammel up" facts and put power anywhere but where nature puts it. If an Emperor is not a strong man he will not govern, and his Ministers will. And it seems to be well understood among Japanese politicians that the personal will of the Emperor does not, in fact, count for very much. But it is supposed to; and that must become an important point so soon as conflict develops between the Parliament and the Government. And such conflict is bound to arise, and is already arising. Japanese parties, it is true, stand for persons rather than principles; and the real governing power hitherto has been a body quite unknown to the Constitution—namely, the group of "Elder Statesmen." But there are signs that this group is disintegrating, and that its members are beginning to recognise the practical necessity of forming and depending upon a party in the country and the House of Representatives. The crisis which led, the other day, to the fall of Prince Katsura was provoked by popular tumults; and it was noticeable that, for the first time, the name of the Emperor was introduced into political controversy. It seems clear that in the near future either the Emperor must appear openly as a fighting force, as the German Emperor

does, or he must subside into a figure-head and the government pass into the hands of Parliament. The former alternative is quite incompatible with the idea of the god-king; the latter might not be repugnant to it if other things tended to foster it. But it is so clear that they do not! An Emperor who is titular head of a Parliamentary Government might, and in Japan no doubt *would*, be surrounded with affection and respect. He could never be seriously regarded as divine. For that whole notion belongs to an age innocent of all that is implied in the very possibility of Parliamentary government. It belongs to the age of mythology and poetry, not to the age of reason. Japanese patriotism in the future must depend on love of country, unsupported by the once powerful sanction of a divine personality.

If this be true, I question very much the wisdom of that part of the Japanese educational system which endeavours to centre all duty about the person of the Emperor. The Japanese are trying a great experiment in State-imposed morality—a policy highly questionable at the best, but becoming almost demonstrably absurd when it is based on an idea which is foredoomed to discredit. The well-known Imperial rescript, which is kept framed in every school, reads as follows:

"Our Ancestors founded the State on a vast basis, and deeply implanted virtue; and Our subjects, by their

unanimity in their great loyalty and filial affection, have in all ages shown these qualities in perfection. Such is the essential beauty of Our national polity, and such, too, is the true spring of Our educational system. You, Our beloved subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers, be loving husbands and wives, and truthful to your friends. Conduct yourselves with modesty, and be benevolent to all. Develop your intellectual faculties and perfect your moral power by gaining knowledge and by acquiring a profession. Further, promote the public interest and advance the public affairs ; and in case of emergency, courageously sacrifice yourself to the public good. Thus offer every support to Our Imperial Dynasty, which shall be as lasting as the Universe. You will then not only be Our most loyal subjects, but will be enabled to exhibit the noble character of your ancestors.

"Such are the testaments left us by Our Ancestors, which must be observed alike by their descendants and subjects. These precepts are perfect throughout all ages and of universal application. It is Our desire to bear them in Our heart, in common with you Our subjects, to the end that we may constantly possess their virtues."

This rescript may be read with admiration. But common sense would teach every Westerner that a document so framed is at variance with the whole bent

of the modern mind, and, if forced upon it, could only goad it into rebellion. And such, I have been informed, and easily believe, is the effect it is beginning to have in Japan. Young people brought up on Western languages and Western science demand a Western, that is a rational, sanction for conduct. They do not believe the Emperor to be divine, and therefore they cannot take their moral principles on trust from him and from his ancestors. The violent reaction from this State-imposed doctrine drives them into sheer scepticism and anarchy. And here, as always throughout history, authority defeats its own purposes. Western ideas cannot be taken *in part*. They cannot be applied to the natural world and fenced off from the moral world. Japan must go through the same crisis through which the West is passing; she must revise the whole basis of her traditional morals And in doing so she must be content to lose that passionate and simple devotion which is the good as well as the evil product of an age of uncritical faith.

V

FUJI

It was raining when we reached Gotemba and took off our boots at the entrance of the inn. I had never before stayed at a Japanese inn, and this one, so my friend assured me, was a bad specimen of the class. Certainly it was disorderly and dirty. It was also overcrowded. But that was inevitable, for a thousand pilgrims in a day were landing at Gotemba station. Men and women, young and old, grandparents, parents, children come flocking in to climb the great mountain. The village street is lined with inns; and in front of each stood a boy with a lantern hailing the new arrivals. We were able, in spite of the crowd, to secure a room to ourselves, and even, with difficulty, some water to wash in—too many people had used and were using the one bath! A table and a chair were provided for the foreigner, and very uncouth they looked in the pretty Japanese room. But a bed was out of the question. One had to sleep on the floor among the fleas. Certainly it was not comfortable; but it was amusing. From my room in the upper storey I looked into the whole row

of rooms in the inn opposite, thrown open to the street, with their screens drawn back. One saw families and parties, a dozen or more in a room, dressing and undressing, naked and clothed, sleeping, eating, talking; all, of course, squatting on the floor, with a low stool for a table, and red-lacquered bowls for plates and dishes. How people manage to eat rice with chopsticks will always be a mystery to me. For my own part, I cannot even—but I will not open that humiliating chapter.

Of the night, the less said the better. I rose with relief, but dressed with embarrassment; for the girl who waited on us selected the moment of my toilet to clean the room. It was still raining hard, and we had decided to abandon our expedition, for another night in that inn was unthinkable. But, about eleven, a gleam of sun encouraged us to proceed, and we started on horseback for the mountain. And here I must note that by the official tariff, approved by the police, a foreigner is charged twice as much for a horse as a Japanese. If one asks why, one is calmly informed that a foreigner, as a rule, is heavier! This is typical of travel in Japan; and there have been moments when I have sympathised with the Californians in their discrimination against the Japanese. Those moments, however, are rare and brief, and speedily repented of.

Naturally, as soon as we had started the weather clouded over again. We rode for three hours at a foot-

pace, and by the time we left our horses and began the ascent on foot we were wrapped in thick, cold mist. There is no difficulty about climbing Fuji, except the fatigue. You simply walk for hours up a steep and ever-steeper heap of ashes. It was perhaps as well that we did not see what lay before us, or we might have been discouraged. We saw nothing but the white-grey mist and the purple-grey soil. Except that, looming out of the cloud just in front of us, there kept appearing and vanishing a long line of pilgrims, with peaked hats, capes, and sandals all made of straw, winding along with their staffs, forty at least, keeping step, like figures in a frieze, like shadows on a sheet, like spirits on the mountain of Purgatory, like anything but solid men walking up a hill. So for hours we laboured on, the slope becoming steeper every step, till we could go no further, and stopped at a shelter to pass the night. Here we were lucky. The other climbers had halted below or above, and we had the long, roomy shed to ourselves. Blankets, a fire of wood, and a good meal restored us. We sat warming and congratulating ourselves, when suddenly our guide at the door gave a cry. We hurried to see. And what a sight it was! The clouds lay below us and a starlit sky above. At our feet the mountain fell away like a cliff, but it fell rather to a glacier than a sea—a glacier infinite as the ocean, yawning in crevasses, billowing in ridges; a glacier not of ice, but of vapour, changing

form as one watched, opening here, closing there, rising, falling, shifting, while far away, at the uttermost verge, appeared a crimson crescent, then a red oval, then a yellow globe, swimming up above the clouds, touching their lights with gold, deepening their shadows, and spreading, where it rose, a lake of silver fire over the surface of the tossing plain.

We looked till it was too cold to look longer, then wrapped ourselves in quilts and went to sleep. At midnight I woke. Outside there was a strange moaning. The wind had risen ; and the sound of it in that lonely place gave me a shock of fear. The mountain, then, was more than a heap of dead ashes. Presences haunted it ; powers indifferent to human fate. That wind had blown before man came into being, and would blow when he had ceased to exist. It moaned and roared. Then it was still. But I could not sleep again, and lay watching the flicker of the lamp on the long wooden roof, and the streaks of moonlight through the chinks, till the coolie lit a fire and called us to get up. We started at four. The clouds were still below, and the moon above ; but she had moved across to the west, Orion had appeared, and a new planet blazed in the east. The last climb was very steep and our breath very scant. But we had other things than that to think of. Through a rift in a cloud to the eastward dawned a salmon-coloured glow ; it brightened to fire ; lit up the clouds above and the clouds below ; blazed

more and intolerably, till, as we reached the summit, the sun leapt into view and sent a long line of light down the tumultuous sea of rolling cloud.

How cold it was! And what an atmosphere inside the highest shelter, where sleepers had been packed like sardines and the newly kindled fire filled the fetid air with acrid smoke! What there was to be seen we saw —the crater, neither wide nor deep; the Shinto temple, where a priest was intoning prayers; and the Post Office, where an enterprising Government sells picture-postcards for triumphant pilgrims to despatch to their friends. My friend must have written at least a dozen, while I waited and shivered with numbed feet and hands. But after an hour we began the descent, and quickly reached the shelter where we were to breakfast. Thence we had to plunge again into the clouds. But before doing so we took a long look at the marvellous scene— more marvellous than any view of earth; icebergs tossing in a sea, mountains exhaling and vanishing, magic castles and palaces towering across infinite space. A step, and once more the white-grey mist and the purple-grey soil. But the clouds had moved higher; and it was not long before we saw, to the south, cliffs and the sea, to the east, the gleam of green fields, running up, under cloud-shadows, to mountain ridges and peaks. And so back to Gotemba, and our now odious inn.

We would not stop there. So we parted, my friend

for Tokyo, I for Kyoto. But time-tables had been fallacious, and I found myself landed at Numatsa, with four hours to wait for the night train, no comfort in the waiting-room, and no Japanese words at my command. I understood then a little better why foreigners are so offensive in the East. They do not know the language; they find themselves impotent where their instinct is to domineer; and they visit on the Oriental the ill-temper which is really produced by their own incompetence. Yes, I must confess that I had to remind myself severely that it was I, and not the Japanese, who was stupid. At last the station-master came to my rescue—the station-master always speaks English. He endured my petulance with the unfailing courtesy and patience of his race, and sent me off at last in a rickshaw to the beach and a Japanese hotel. But my troubles were not ended. I reached the hotel; I bowed and smiled to the group of kow-towing girls; but how to tell them that I wanted a bathe and a meal? Signs were unavailing. We looked at one another and laughed, but that did not help. At last they sent for a student who knew a little English. I could have hugged him. "It is a great pity," he said, "that these people do not know English." The pity, I replied, was that I did not know Japanese, but his courtesy repudiated the suggestion. Could I have a bathing costume? Of course! And in a quarter of an hour he brought me a wet one. Where could I change? He showed me a

room; and presently I was swimming in the sea, with such delight as he only can know who has ascended and descended Fuji without the chance of a bath. Returning to the inn, I wandered about in my wet costume seeking vainly the room in which I had changed. Laughing girls pushed me here, and pulled me there, uncomprehending of my pantomime, till one at last, quicker than the rest, pulled back a slide, and revealed the room I was seeking. Then came dinner—soup, fried fish, and rice; and—for my weakness—a spoon and fork to eat them with. The whole house seemed to be open, and one looked into every room, watching the ways of these gay and charming people. At last I paid—to accomplish *that* by pantomime was easy,—and said good-bye to my hostess and her maids, who bowed their heads to the ground and smiled as though I had been the most honoured of guests instead of a clumsy foreigner, fit food for mirth. A walk in a twilight pine wood, and then back to the station, where I boarded the night train, and slept fitfully until five, when we reached Kyoto, and my wanderings were over. How I enjoyed the comfort of the best hotel in the East! But also how I regretted that I had not long ago learnt to find comfort in the far more beautiful manner of life of Japan!

VI

JAPAN AND AMERICA

On the reasons, real or alleged, for the hostility of the Californians to the Japanese this is not the place to dwell. At bottom, it is a conflict of civilisations, a conflict which is largely due to ignorance and misunderstanding, and which should never be allowed to develop into avowed antagonism. For with time, patience, and sympathy it will disappear of itself. The patience and sympathy, I think, are not lacking on the side of the Japanese, but they are sadly lacking among the Californians, and indeed among all white men in Western America. The truth is that the Western pioneer knows nothing of Japan and wants to know nothing. And he would be much astonished, not to say indignant, were he told that the civilisation of Japan is higher than that of America. Yet there can, I think, be no doubt that this is the case, if real values be taken as a standard. America, and the "new" countries generally, have contributed, so far, nothing to the world except material prosperity. I do not under-estimate this. It is a great thing to have subdued a continent.

And it may be argued that those who are engaged in this task have no energy to spare for other activities. But the Japanese subdued their island centuries, even millenniums, ago. And, having reduced it to as high a state of culture as they required, they began to live—a thing the new countries have not yet attempted.

To live, in the sense in which I am using the term, implies that you reflect life in the forms of art, literature, philosophy, and religion. To all these things the Japanese have made notable contributions; less notable, indeed, than those of China, from whom they derived their inspiration, but still native, genuine, and precious. To take first bare externals, the physical life of the Japanese is beautiful. I read with amazement the other day a quotation from a leading Californian newspaper to the effect that "there is an instinctive sense of physical repugnance on the part of the Western or European races towards the Japanese race"! Had the writer, I wonder, ever been in Japan? Perhaps it would have made no difference to him if he had, for he is evidently one of those who cannot or will not see. But to me the first and chief impression of Japan is the physical attractiveness of the people. The Japanese are perfectly proportioned; their joints, their hands, their feet, their hips are elegant and fine; and they display to the best advantage these natural graces by a costume which is as beautiful as it is simple. To see these perfect figures walking, running, mounting stairs,

bathing, even pulling rickshaws, is to receive a constant stream of shocks of surprise and delight. In so much that, after some weeks in the country, I begin to feel "a sense of physical repugnance" to Americans and Europeans—a sense which, if I were as uneducated and inexperienced as the writer in the *Argonaut*, I should call "instinctive," and make the basis of a campaign of race-hatred. The misfortune is that the Japanese abandon their own dress when they go abroad. And in European dress, which they do not understand, and which conceals their bodies, they are apt to look mean and vulgar. Similarly, in European dress, they lose their own perfect manners and mis-acquire the worst of the West. So that there may be some excuse for feeling "repugnance" to the Japanese abroad, though, of course, it is merely absurd and barbarous to base upon such superficial distaste a policy of persecution and insult.

If we turn from the body to the mind and the spirit, the Japanese show themselves in no respect inferior, and in some important respects superior, to the Americans. New though they are to the whole mental attitude which underlies science and its applications, they have already, in half a century, produced physicians, surgeons, pathologists, engineers who can hold their own with the best of Europe and America. All that the West can do in this, its own special sphere, the Japanese, late-comers though they be, are showing that they can

do too. In particular, to apply the only test which the Western nations seem really to accept, they can build ships, train men, organise a campaign, and beat a great Western Power at the West's own game of slaughter. But all this, of science and armaments, big though it bulks in our imagination, is secondary and subordinate in a true estimate of civilisation. The great claim the Japanese may make, as I began by saying, is that they have known how to live; and they have proved that by the only test—by the way they have reflected life.

Japanese literature and art may not be as great as that of Europe; but it exists, whereas that of America and all the new countries is yet to seek. While Europe was still plunged in the darkest of the dark ages, Japanese poets were already producing songs in exquisite response to the beauty of nature, the passion and pathos of human life. From the seventh century on, their painting and their sculpture was reflecting in tender and gracious forms the mysteries of their faith. Their literature and their art changed its content and its form with the centuries, but it continued without a break, in a stream of genuine inspiration, down to the time when the West forced open the doors of Japan to the world. From that moment, under the new influences, it has sickened and declined. But what a record! And a record that is also an incontrovertible proof that the Japanese belong to the

civilised nations—the nations that can live and express life.

But perhaps this test may be rejected. Morals, it may be urged, is the touchstone of civilisation, not art. Well, take morals. The question is a large one; but, summarily, where do the Japanese fail, as compared with the Western nations? Is patriotism the standard? In this respect what nation can compete with them? Is it courage? What people are braver? Is it industry? Who is more industrious? It is their very industry that has aroused the jealous fears of the Californians. Is it family life? Where, outside the East, is found such solidarity as in Japan? Is it sexual purity? On that point, what Western nation can hold up its head? Is it honesty? What of the honesty of the West? No; no Westerner, knowing the facts, could for a moment maintain that, all round and on the whole, the morals of the Japanese are inferior to those of Europe or America. It would probably be easier to maintain the opposite. Judged by every real test the Japanese civilisation is not lower, it is higher than that of any of the new countries who refuse to permit the Japanese to live among them.

That, I admit, does not settle the question. Competent and impartial men like Admiral Mahan, who would admit all that I have urged, still maintain that the Japanese ought not to be allowed to settle in the West. This conclusion I do not now discuss. The

point I wish to make is that the question can never be fairly faced, in a dry light, and with reference only to the simple facts, until the prejudice is broken up and destroyed that the Japanese, and all other Orientals, are "inferior" races. It is this prejudice which distorts all the facts and all the values, which makes Californians and British Columbians and Australians sheerly unreasonable, and causes them to jump at one argument after another, each more fallacious than the last, to defend an attitude which at bottom is nothing but the childish and ignorant hatred of the uncultivated man for everything strange. If the Japanese had had white skins, should we ever have heard of the economic argument? And should we ever have been presented with that new shibboleth "unassimilable"?

VII

HOME

Moscow, Berlin, Paris, London! What a crescendo of life! What a quickening of the flow! What a gathering intensity! "Whatever else we may think of the West," I said to the young French artist, "it is, at any rate, the centre of life." "Yes," he replied, "but the curious thing is that that Life produces only Death. Dead things, and dead people." I reflected. Yes! The *things* certainly were dead. Look at the Louvre! Look at the Madeleine! Look at any of the streets! Machine-men had made it all, not human souls. The men were dead, then, too? "Certainly!" he insisted. "Their works are a proof. Where there is life there is art. And there is no art in the modern world—neither in the East nor in the West." "Then what *is* this that looks like Life?" I said, looking at the roaring streets. He shrugged his shoulders and said, "Steam."

With that in my mind, I crossed to England, and forgot criticism and speculation in the gleam of the white cliffs, in the trim hedgerows and fields, in the

sound of English voices and the sight of English faces. In London it was the same. The bright-cheeked messenger boys, the discreetly swaggering chauffeurs, the quiet, competent young men in City offices who reassured me about my baggage, the autumn sun on the maze of misty streets, the vast picturesqueness of London, its beauty as of a mountain or the sea, fairly carried me off my feet. And passing St. Paul's—" Dead," I muttered, as I looked at its derivative façade,—I went in to take breath. From the end of the vast, cold space came the dreary wail I remembered so well. I had heard Church music at Moscow, and knew what it ought to be. But the tremendous passion of that Eastern plain-song would have offended these discreet walls. I was in a " sacred edifice " ; and with a pang of regret I recalled the wooden shrines of Japan under the great trees, the solemn Buddhas, and the crowds of cheerful worshippers. I walked down the empty nave and came under the dome. Then something happened —the thing that always happens when one comes into touch with the work of a genius. And Wren's dome proves that he was that. I sat down, and the organ began to play ; or rather, the dome began to sing. And down the stream of music floated in fragments visions of my journey—Indians nude like bronzes, blue-coated Chinese, white robes and bare limbs from Japan, plains of corn, plains of rice, plains of scorched grass ; snow-peaks under the stars, volcanoes, green and

black; huge rivers, tumbling streams, waterfalls, lakes, the ocean; hovels and huts of wood or sun-dried bricks, thatched or tiled; marble palaces and baths; red lacquer, golden tiles; saints, kings, conquerors, and, enduring or worshipping these, a myriad generations of peasants through long millenniums, toiling, suffering, believing, in one unchanging course of life, before the dawn of history on and down to here and now. As they were, so they are; and I heard them sound as with the drone of Oriental music. Then above that drone something new appeared. Late in time, Western history emerged, and—astonishing thing—began to move and change! "Why," I said, "there's something trying to happen! What is it? Is there going to be a melody?" There *was* not one. But there was—has the reader ever heard the second—or is it the third?—overture to "Leonora"? A scale begins to run up, first on the violins; then one by one the other instruments join in, till the great basses are swept into the current and run and scale too. So it was here. The West began; but the East caught it up. The unchanging drone began to move and flow. Faster and faster, louder and louder, more and more intensely, crying and flaming towards—what? Beethoven knew, and put it into his music. We cannot put it into ideas or words. We can see the problem, not the solution; and the problem is this. To reconcile the Western flight down Time with the Eastern rest in

Eternity; the Western multiformity with the Eastern identity; the Western energy with the Eastern peace. For God is neither Time nor Eternity, but Time in Eternity; neither One nor Many, but One in Many; neither Spirit nor Matter, but Matter-Spirit. That the great artists know, and the great saints; the modern artists and the modern saints, who have been or who will be. Goethe was one; Beethoven was one; and there will be greater, when the contact between East and West becomes closer, and the sparks from pole to pole fly faster.

I had dropped into mere thinking, and realised that the organ had stopped. I left the great church and came out upon the back of Queen Anne, which made me laugh. Still, it was quite religious; so were the 'buses, and the motor-cars, and the shops and offices, and the Law Courts, and the top-hats, and the crossing-sweepers. "Dear people," I said, "you are not dead, any more than I am. You think you are, as I too often do. When you feel dead you should go to church; but not in a 'sacred edifice.' Beethoven, even in the Queen's Hall, is better."

PART IV

AMERICA

I

THE "DIVINE AVERAGE"

THE great countries of the East have each a civilisation that is original, if not independent. India, China, Japan, each has a peculiar outlook on the world. Not so America, at any rate in the north. America, we might say, does not exist; there exists instead an offshoot of Europe. Nor does an "American spirit" exist; there exists instead the spirit of the average Western man. Americans are immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Putting aside the negroes and a handful of orientals, there is nothing to be found here that is not to be found in Western Europe; only here what thrives is not what is distinctive of the different European countries, but what is common to them all. What America does, not, of course, in a moment, but with incredible rapidity, is to obliterate distinctions. The Scotchman, the Irishman, the German, the Scandinavian, the Italian, even, I suppose, the Czech, drops his costume, his manner, his language, his traditions, his beliefs, and retains only his common Western humanity. Transported to this continent all the varieties developed

in Europe revert to the original type, and flourish in unexampled vigour and force. It is not a new type that is evolved; it is the fundamental type, growing in a new soil, in luxuriant profusion. Describe the average Western man and you describe the American; from east to west, from north to south, everywhere and always the same—masterful, aggressive, unscrupulous, egotistic, at once good-natured and brutal, kind if you do not cross him, ruthless if you do, greedy, ambitious, self-reliant, active for the sake of activity, intelligent and unintellectual, quick-witted and crass, contemptuous of ideas but amorous of devices, valuing nothing but success, recognising nothing but the actual, Man in the concrete, undisturbed by spiritual life, the master of methods and slave of things, and therefore the conqueror of the world, the unquestioning, the undoubting, the child with the muscles of a man, the European stripped bare, and shown for what he is, a predatory, unreflecting, naïf, precociously accomplished brute.

One does not then find in America anything one does not find in Europe; but one finds in Europe what one does not find in America. One finds, as well as the average, what is below and what is above it. America has, broadly speaking, no waste products. The wreckage, everywhere evident in Europe, is not evident there. Men do not lose their self-respect, they win it; they do not drop out, they work in. This is the great result not of American institutions or ideas, but of American oppor-

tunities. It is the poor immigrant who ought to sing the praises of this continent. He alone has the proper point of view; and he, unfortunately, is dumb. But often, when I have contemplated with dreary disgust, in the outskirts of New York, the hideous wooden shanties planted askew in wastes of garbage, and remembered Naples or Genoa or Venice, suddenly it has been borne in upon me that the Italians living there feel that they have their feet on the ladder leading to paradise; that for the first time they have before them a prospect and a hope; and that while they have lost, or are losing, their manners, their beauty and their charm, they have gained something which, in their eyes, and perhaps in reality, more than compensates for losses they do not seem to feel, they have gained self-respect, independence, and the allure of the open horizon. "The vision of America," a friend writes, "is the vision of the lifting up of the millions." This, I believe, is true, and it is America's great contribution to civilisation. I do not forget it; but neither shall I dwell upon it; for though it is, I suppose, the most important thing about America, it is not what I come across in my own experience. What strikes more often and more directly home to me is the other fact that America, if she is not burdened by masses lying below the average, is also not inspired by an élite rising above it. Her distinction is the absence of distinction. No wonder Walt Whitman

sang the "Divine Average." There was nothing else in America for him to sing. But he should not have called it divine; he should have called it "human, all too human."

Or *is* it divine? Divine somehow in its potentialities? Divine to a deeper vision than mine? I was writing this at Brooklyn, in a room that looks across the East River to New York. And after putting down those words, "human, all too human," I stepped out on to the terrace. Across the gulf before me went shooting forward and back interminable rows of fiery shuttles; and on its surface seemed to float blazing basilicas. Beyond rose into the darkness a dazzling tower of light, dusking and shimmering, primrose and green, up to a diadem of gold. About it hung galaxies and constellations, outshining the firmament of stars; and all the air was full of strange voices, more than human, ingeminating Babylonian oracles out of the bosom of night. This is New York. This it is that the average man has done, he knows not why; this is the symbol of his work, so much more than himself, so much more than what seems to be itself in the common light of day. America does not know what she is doing, neither do I know, nor any man. But the impulse that drives her, so mean and poor to the critic's eye, has perhaps more significance in the eye of God; and the optimism of this continent, so seeming-frivolous, is justified, may be, by reason lying beyond its ken.

II

A CONTINENT OF PIONEERS

THE American, I said, in the previous letter, is the average Western man. It should be added, he is the average man in the guise of pioneer. Much that surprises or shocks Europeans in the American character is to be explained, I believe, by this fact. Among pioneers the individual is everything and the society nothing. Every man relies on himself and on his personal relations. He is a friend, and an enemy; he is never a citizen. Justice, order, respect for law, honesty even and honour are to him mere abstract names; what is real is intelligence and force, the service done or the injury inflicted, the direct emotional reaction to persons and deeds. And still, as it seems to the foreign observer, even in the long-settled east, still more in the west, this attitude prevails. To the American politician or business man, that a thing is right or wrong, legal or illegal, seems a pale and irrelevant consideration. The real question is, will it pay? will it please Theophilus P. Polk or vex Harriman Q. Kunz? If it is illegal, will it be detected? If detected, will it be prosecuted?

What are our resources for evading or defeating the law? And all this with good temper and good conscience. What stands in the way, says the pioneer, must be swept out of it; no matter whether it be the moral or the civil law, a public authority or a rival in business. "The strong business man" has no use for scruples. Public or social considerations do not appeal to him. Or if they do present themselves, he satisfies himself with the belief that, from activities so strenuous and remarkable as his, Good must result to the community. If he break the law, that is the fault of the law, for being stupid and obstructive; if he break individuals, that is their fault for being weak. *Vae victis!* Never has that principle, or rather instinct, ruled more paramount than it does in America.

To say this, is to say that American society is the most individualistic in the modern world. This follows naturally from the whole situation of the country. The pioneer has no object save to get rich; the government of pioneers has no object save to develop the country quickly. To this object everything is sacrificed, including the interests of future generations. All new countries have taken the most obvious and easy course. They have given away for nothing, or for a song, the whole of their natural resources to anybody who will undertake to exploit them. And those who have appropriated this wealth have judged it to be theirs by a kind of natural right. "These farms,

mines, forests, oilsprings—of course they are ours. Did not we discover them? Did not we squat upon them? Have we not 'mixed our labour with them'?" If pressed as to the claims of later comers they would probably reply that there remains "as much and as good" for others. And this of course is true for a time; but for a very short time, even when it is a continent that is being divided up. Practically the whole territory of the United States is now in private ownership. Still, the owners have made such good use of their opportunities that they have created innumerable opportunities for non-owners. Artisans get good wages; lawyers make fortunes; stock and share holders get high dividends. Every one feels that he is flourishing, and flourishing by his own efforts. He has no need to combine with his fellows; or, if he does combine, is ready to desert them in a moment when he sees his own individual chance.

But this is only a phase; and inevitably, by the logic of events, there supervenes upon it another on which, it would appear, America is just now entering. With all her natural resources distributed among individuals or corporations, and with the tide of immigration unchecked, she begins to feel the first stress of the situation of which the tension in Europe has already become almost intolerable. It is the situation which cannot fail to result from the system of private property and inheritance established throughout the

Western world: Opportunities diminish, classes segregate. There arises a caste of wage-earners never to be anything but wage-earners; a caste of property-owners, handing on their property to their descendants; and substantially, after all deductions have been made for exaggeration and simplification, a division of society into capitalists and proletarians. American society is beginning to crystallise out into the forms of European society. For, once more, America is nothing new; she is a repetition of the old on a larger scale. And, curiously, she is less "new" than the other new countries. Australia and New Zealand for years past have been trying experiments in social policy; they are determined to do what they can to prevent the recurrence there of the European situation. But in America, there is no sign of such tendencies. The political and social philosophy of the United States is still that of the early English individualists. And, no doubt, there are adequate causes, if not good reasons for this. The immense wealth and size of the country, the huge agricultural population, the proportionally smaller aggregation in cities has maintained in the mass of the people what I have called the "pioneer" attitude. Opportunity has been, and still is, more open than in any other country; and, in consequence, there has hardly emerged a definite "working class" with a class consciousness. This, however, is a condition that cannot be expected to continue. America will develop

on the lines of Europe, because she has European institutions; and "labour" will assert itself more and more as an independent factor in politics.

Whether it will assert itself successfully is another matter. At present, as is notorious, American politics are controlled by wealth, more completely, perhaps, than those of any other country, even of England. The "corporations" make it a main part of their business to capture Congress, the Legislatures, the Courts and the city governments; and they are eminently successful. The smallest country town has its "boss," in the employ of the Railway; the Public Service Corporations control the cities; and the protected interests dominate the Senate. Business governs America; and business does not include labour. In no civilised country except Japan is labour-legislation so undeveloped as in the States; in none is capital so uncontrolled; in none is justice so openly prostituted to wealth. America is the paradise of plutocracy; for the rich there enjoy not only a real power but a social prestige such as can hardly have been accorded to them even in the worst days of the Roman Empire. Great fortunes and their owners are regarded with a respect as naïf and as intense as has ever been conceded to birth in Europe. No American youth of ambition, I am told, leaves college with any less or greater purpose in his heart than that of emulating Mr. Carnegie or Mr. Rockefeller. And, on the other hand, it must be conceded,

rich men feel an obligation to dispose of their wealth for public purposes, to a degree quite unknown in Europe. By these lavish gifts the people are dazzled. They feel that the millionaire has paid his ransom; and are ready to forgive irregularities in the process of acquiring wealth when they are atoned for by such splendid penance. Thus the rich man in America comes to assume the position of a kind of popular dictator. He is admired on account of his prowess and forgiven on account of his beneficence. And, since every one feels that one day he may have the chance of imitating him, no one judges him too severely. He is regarded not as the "exploiter," the man grown fat on the labour of others. Rather he is the type, the genius of the American people; and they point to him with pride as "one of our strong men," "one of our conservative men of business."

Individualism, then, is stronger and deeper rooted in America than elsewhere. And, it must be added, socialism is weaker. It is an imported article, and it does not thrive on the new soil. The formulæ of Marx are even less congenial to the American than to the English mind; and American conditions have not yet given rise to a native socialism, based on local conditions and adapted to local habits of thought. Such a native socialism, I believe, is bound to come before long, perhaps is arising even now. But I would not hazard the assertion that it is likely to prevail. America, it

would seem, stands at the parting of the ways. Either she may develop on democratic lines ; and Democracy, as I think, demonstrably implies some kind of socialism. Or she may fossilise in the form of her present Plutocracy, and realise that new feudalism of industry which was dreamt of by Saint-Simon, by Comte, and by Carlyle. It would be a strange consummation, but stranger things have happened ; and it seems more probable that this should happen in America than that it should happen in any European country. It is an error to think of America as democratic ; her Democracy is all on the surface. But in Europe, Democracy is penetrating deeper and deeper. And, in particular, there can be little doubt that England is now more democratic than the United States.

III

NIAGARA

I SHALL not describe Niagara; instead I shall repeat a conversation.

After a day spent in visiting the falls and the rapids, I was sitting to-night on a bench on the river bank. The racing water-ridges glimmered faintly in the dusk and the roar of the falls droned in unwavering monotony. I fell, I think, into a kind of stupor; anyhow, I cannot remember when it was that some one took a seat beside me, and began to talk. I seemed to wake and feel him speaking; and the first remark I definitely heard was this: "All America is Niagara." "All America is Niagara," the voice repeated—I could see no face. "Force without direction, noise without significance, speed without accomplishment. All day and all night the water rushes and roars. I sit and listen; and it does nothing. It is Nature; and Nature has no significance. It is we poets who create significance, and for that reason Nature hates us. She is afraid of us, for she knows that we condemn her. We have standards before which she shrinks abashed. But

she has her revenge; for poets are incarnate. She owns our bodies; and she hurls us down Niagara with the rest, with the others that she loves, and that love her, the virile big-jawed men, trampling and trampled, hustling and hustled, working and asking no questions, falling as water and dispersing as spray. Nature is force, loves force, wills force alone. She hates the intellect, she hates the soul, she hates the spirit. Nietszche understood her aright, Nietszche the arch-traitor, who spied on the enemy, learned her secrets, and then went over to her side. Force rules the world."

I must have said something banal about progress, for the voice broke out:

"There is no progress! It is always the same river! New waves succeed for ever, but always in the old forms. History tells, from beginning to end, the same tale—the victory of the strong over the sensitive, of the active over the reflective, of intelligence over intellect. Rome conquered Greece, the Germans the Italians, the English the French, and now, the Americans the world! What matters the form of the struggle, whether it be in arms or commerce, whether the victory go to the sword, or to shoddy, advertisement, and fraud? History is the perennial conquest of civilisation by barbarians. The little islands before us, lovely with trees and flowers, green oases in the rushing river, it is but a few years and they will be engulfed. So Greece was swallowed up, so Italy, and so will it be with

England. Not, as your moralists maintain, because of her vices, but because of her virtues. She is becoming just, scrupulous, humane, and therefore she is doomed. Ignoble though she be, she is yet too noble to survive; for Germany and America are baser than she. Hark, Hark to Niagara! Force, at all costs! Do you hear it? Do you see it? I can see it, though it is dark. It is a river of mouths and teeth, of greedy outstretched hands, of mirthless laughter, of tears and of blood. I am there, you are there; we are hurrying over the fall; we are going up in spray."

"Yes," I cried as one cries in a nightmare, "and in that spray hangs the rainbow."

He caught at the phrase. "It is true. The rainbow hangs in the spray! It is the type of the Ideal, hanging always above the Actual, never in it, never controlling it. We poets make the rainbow; we do not shape the world."

"We do not make the rainbow," I said. "The sun makes it, shining against it. What is the sun?"

"The sun is the Platonic Good; it lights the world, but does not warm it. By its illumination we see the river in which we are involved; see and judge, and condemn, and are swept away. That we can condemn is our greatness; by that we are children of the sun. But our vision is never fruitful. The sun cannot breed out of matter; no, not even maggots by kissing carrion. Between Force and Light, Matter and Good, there is

no interchange. Good is not a cause, it is only an idea."

"To illuminate," I said, "is to transform."

"No! it is only to reveal! Light dances on the surface; but not the tiniest wave was ever dimpled or crisped by its rays. Matter alone moves matter; and the world is matter. Best not cry, best not even blaspheme. Pass over the fall in silence. Perhaps, at the bottom, there is oblivion. It is the best we can hope, we who see."

And he was gone! Had there been anyone? Was there a real voice? I do not know. Perhaps it was only the roar of Niagara. When I returned to the hotel, I heard that this very afternoon, while I was sunning myself on one of the islands, a woman had thrown herself into the rapids and been swept over the fall. Niagara took her, as it takes a stick or a stone. Soon it will take the civilisation of America, as it has taken that of the Indians. Centuries will pass, millenniums will pass, mankind will have come and gone, and still the river will flow and the sun shine, and they will communicate to one another their stern immortal joy, in which there is no part for ephemeral men.

IV

"THE MODERN PULPIT"

It is a bright July morning. As I sit in the garden I look out, over a tangle of wild roses, to a calm sea and a flock of white sails. Everything invites to happy thought and innocent reverie. Moreover, it is the day of rest, and every one is at leisure to turn his mind towards pleasant things. To what, in fact, are most people on this continent turning theirs? To this, which I hold in my hand, the Sunday newspaper.

Let us analyse this production, peculiar to the New World. It comprises eight sections and eighty-eight pages, and very likely does really, as it boasts, contain "more reading matter than the whole Bible."

Opening Section 1, I read the following headings:

> "Baron Shot as Bank-teller—Ends Life with Bullet."
>
> "Two fatally Hurt in Strike Riots at Pittsburg."
>
> "Steals a Look at Busy Burglars."
>
> "Drowned in Surf at Narragansett."
>
> "Four of a Family fear a Dogs' bite" (*sic*).
>
> "Two are Dead, Two Dying; Fought over Cow."

Section 2 appears to be concerned with similar matter, for example:

"Struck by Blast, Woman is Dying."

"Hard Shell Crabs help in giving Burglar Alarm."

"Man who has been Married three times denies the Existence of God."

But here I notice further the interesting and enigmatic heading:

"Will 'boost' not 'knock' New York,"

and roused for the first time to something like curiosity, read:

"To lock horns with the muckrakes and to defend New York against all who defame and censure it the Association for New York was incorporated yesterday."

I notice also "Conferences agree to short rates on woollen goods," and am reminded of the shameless bargaining of which, for many weeks past, Washington has been the centre; which leads me to reflect on the political advantages of a Tariff and its wholesome effect on the national life.

Section 3 deals with Aviation and seaside resorts:

"Brave Lake Placid," I read, "Planning New Hotel."

"Haines Falls entertaining a Great Throng of People."

"Resound with the Laughter and Shout of Summer Throngs."

Section 4 consists entirely of advertisements:

"Tuning-up Sale," I read. "Buff-and-crimson cards will mark the trail of all goods ready for the sale. We are tuning up. By September it is our intention to have assembled in these two great buildings the most fashionable merchandise ever shown. No one piece of goods will be permitted to linger that lacks, in any detail, the æsthetic beauty demanded by New York women of fashion. Everything will be better and a definite percentage lower in price than New York will find in any other store. Do not expect a sale of ordinary proportions. To-morrow you will find the store alive with enthusiasm. This is not a summer hurrah." And so on, to the end of the page. Twelve pages of advertisements, uninterrupted by any item of news.

Section 5 is devoted to automobile gossip and automobile advertisements.

Thereupon follows the *Special Sporting Section:*

"Rumsom Freebooters defeat Devon's first."

"'Young Corbett' is chipped in the 8th."

"Doggett and Cubs each win shut out."

"Brockett is easy for Detroit Nine."

Glancing at the small type I read:—

"Englewood was the first to tally. This was in the fourth inning. W. Merritt, the first man up, was safe on Williams' error, and he got round to third on another miscue by Williams. Charley Clough was on deck with a timely single, which scored Merritt. Curran's

out at first put Clough on third, from whence he tallied on Cuming's single. Cuming got to second, when Wiley grounded out along the first base line and scored on Reinmund's single. Every other time Reinmund came to the bat he struck out."

I pass to the *Magazine Section.*

On the first page is the mysterious heading "E. of K. and E." Several huge portraits of a bald clean-shaven man in shirt sleeves partially explain. E. is Mr. Erlanger, a theatrical impresario, and K. and E. presumably is his firm. The article describes "the accomplishment of a busy man on one of his ordinary days," and makes one hope no day is ever extraordinary. The interviewer who tells about him is almost speechless with emotion. He searches for a phrase to express his feelings, finds it at last, and comes triumphantly to his close—Mr. Erlanger is a man "with trained arms, trained legs, a trained body and a trained mind." There follows: "The Story of a Society Girl," in which we are told "there is a confession of love and the startling discovery that Dolly was a professional model"; "The Doctor's Story," with a picture of a corpse, "whose white shapely hands were clasped one over the other"; and "Would you Convict on Circumstantial Evidence?—A Scaffold Confession. A True Story." I glance at this, and read, "While the crowd watched in strained, breathless silence there came a sharp agonised voice and a commotion near the steps

of the scaffold. 'Stop! Stop! The man is not guilty. I mean it. It is I who should stand there. Let me speak." You can now reconstruct the story for yourself. Next comes "Get the Man! Craft and courage of old-time and modern express robbers matched by organised secret service and the mandate that makes capture alone the end of an unflagging man-hunt." This is accompanied by portraits of famous detectives and train-robbers.

There follows "*Thrilling Lines*," with a picture of a man who seems to be looping the loop on a bicycle.

And the conclusion of the section is a poem, entitled "Cynthianna Blythe," with coloured illustrations apparently intended for children, and certainly successful in not appealing to adults.

Comment, I suppose, is superfluous. But it is only fair to say that the whole of the press of America is not of this character. Among the thousands of papers daily produced on that continent, it would be possible, I believe, to name ten—I myself could mention five—which contain in almost every issue some piece of information or comment which an intelligent man might care to peruse. There are to be found, now and again, passing references to European and even to Asiatic politics; for it cannot be said that the press of America wholly ignored the recent revolutions in Persia and in Turkey. I myself saw a reference to the new Sultan as a man "fat, but not fleshy." England

looms big enough on the American horizon to be treated to an occasional gibe; and the doings of fashionable Americans in London are reported somewhat fully. Still, on the whole, the American daily press is typified by the specimen I have analysed. Sensations, personalities and fiction are its stock-in-trade. Why? The causes are well known, but are worth recapitulating, for they are part of the system of modern civilisation.

The newspaper press is a business intended to make money. This is its primary aim, which may, or may not, include the subordinate purpose of advocating some line of public policy. Now, to make money, it is essential to secure advertisements; and to secure advertisements it is essential to have a large circulation. But a large circulation can only be obtained by lowering the price of the paper, and adapting it to the leisure mood of the mass of people. But this leisure mood is usually one of sheer vacuity, incapable of intellectual effort or imaginative response. The man is there, waiting to be filled, and to be filled with the stuff easiest to digest. The rest follows. The newspapers supply the demand and by supplying extend and perpetuate it. Among the possible appeals open to them they deliberately choose the lowest. For people are capable of Good as well as of Bad; and if they cannot get the Bad they will sometimes take the Good. Newspapers, probably, could exist, even under democratic conditions, by maintaining a certain standard of intelligence and

morals. But it is easier to exist on melodrama, fatuity and sport. And one or two papers adopting that course force the others into line; for here, as in so many departments of modern life, "The Bad drives out the Good." This process of deterioration of the press is proceeding rapidly in England, with the advent of the halfpenny newspaper. It has not gone so far as in America; but there is no reason why it should not, and every reason why it should; for the same causes are at work.

I have called the process "deterioration," but that, of course, is matter of opinion. A Cabinet Minister, at a recent Conference in London, is reported to have congratulated the press on its progressive improvement during recent years. And Lord Northcliffe is a peer. The more the English press approximates to the American, the more, it would seem, it may hope for public esteem and honour. And that is natural, for the American method pays.

Well, the sun still shines and the sky is still blue. But between it and the American people stretches a veil of printed paper. Curious! the fathers of this nation read nothing but the Bible. That too, it may be said, was a veil; but a veil woven of apocalyptic visions, of lightning and storm, of Leviathan, and the wrath of Jehovah. What is the stuff of the modern veil, we have seen. And surely the contrast is calculated to evoke curious reflections.



IN THE ROCKIES

WALKING alone in the mountains to-day I came suddenly upon the railway. There was a little shanty of a station 8000 feet above the sea; and, beyond, the great expanse of the plains. It was beginning to sleet, and I determined to take shelter. The click of a telegraph operator told me there was some one inside the shed. I knocked and knocked again, in vain; and it was a quarter of an hour before the door was opened by a thin, yellow-faced youth chewing gum, who looked at me without a sign of recognition or a word of greeting. I have learnt by this time that absence of manners in an American is intended to signify not surliness but independence, so I asked to be allowed to enter. He admitted me, and resumed his operations. I listened to the clicking, while the sleet fell faster and the evening began to close in. What messages were they, I wondered, that were passing across the mountains? I connected them, idly enough, with the corner in wheat a famous speculator was endeavouring to establish in Chicago; and reflected upon the disproportion between the

achievements of Man and the use he puts them to. He invents wireless telegraphy, and the ships call to one another day and night, to tell the name of the latest winner. He is inventing the flying-machine, and he will use it to advertise pills and drop bombs. And here, he has exterminated the Indians, and carried his lines and his poles across the mountains, that a gambler may fill his pockets by starving a continent. "Click — click — click — Pick — pick — pick — Pock — pock — pockets." So the west called to the east, and the east to the west, while the winds roared, and the sleet fell, over the solitary mountains and the desolate iron road.

It was too late now for me to reach my hotel that evening, and I was obliged to beg a night's rest. The yellow youth assented, with his air of elaborate indifference, and proceeded to make me as comfortable as he could. About sunset, the storm passed away over the plains. Behind its flying fringes shot the last rays of the sun; and for a moment the prairie sea was all bared to view, as wide as the sky. as calm and as profound, a thousand miles of grass where men and cattle crept like flies, and towns and houses were swallowed and lost in the infinite monotony. We had supper and then my host began to talk. He was a democrat, and we discussed the coming presidential election. From one newspaper topic to another we passed to the talk about signalling to Mars. Signalling interested the youth;

he knew all about that; but he knew nothing about Mars, or the stars. These were now shining bright above us; and I told him what I knew of suns and planets, of double stars, of the moons, of Jupiter, of nebulæ and the galaxy, and the infinity of space, and of worlds. He chewed and meditated, and presently remarked: "Gee! I guess then it doesn't matter two cents after all who gets elected president!" Whereupon we turned in, he to sleep and I to lie awake, for I was disturbed by the mystery of the stars. It is long since the notion of infinite space and infinite worlds has impressed my imagination with anything but discomfort and terror. The Ptolemaic scheme was better suited to human needs. Our religious sense demands not only order but significance; a world not merely great, but relevant to our destinies. Copernicus, it is true, gave us liberty and space; but he bereft us of security and intimacy. And I thought of the great vision of Dante, so terrible and yet so beautiful, so human through and through,—that vision which, if it contracts space, expands the fate of man, and relates him to the sun and the moon and the stars. I thought of him as he crossed the Apennines by night, or heard from the sea at sunset the tinkling of the curfew bell, or paced in storm the forest of Ravenna, always, beyond and behind the urgency of business, the chances of war, the bitterness of exile, aware of the march of the sun about the earth, of its station in the Zodiac, of the solemn

and intricate wheeling of the spheres. Aware, too, of the inner life of those bright luminaries, the dance and song of spirits purged by fire, the glow of Mars, the milky crystal of the moon, and Jupiter's intolerable blaze; and beyond these, kindling these, setting them their orbits and their order, by attraction not of gravitation, but of love, the ultimate Essence, imaged by purest light and hottest fire, whereby all things and all creatures move in their courses and their fates, to whom they tend and in whom they rest.

And I recalled the passage:

"Frate, la nostra volontà quieta
Virtù di carità, che fa volerne
Sol quel ch'avemo, e d'altro non ci asseta.
Se disiassimo esser più superne,
Fôran discordi gli nostri disiri
Dal voler di Colui che qui ne cerne;
Che vedrai non capere in questi giri,
S'essere in caritate è qui necesse,
E se la sua natura ben rimiri;
Anzi è formale ad esto beato esse
Tenersi dentro alla divina voglia,
Perch'una fansi nostre voglie stesse.
Si che, come noi siam di soglia in soglia
Per questo regno, a tutto il regno piace,
Com'allo re, che in suo voler ne invoglia.
E la sua volontade è nostra pace:
Ella è quel mare al qual tutto si muove
Cio ch' ella crea o che natura face." [1]

[1] "Brother, the quality of love stilleth our will, and maketh us long only for what we have, and giveth us no other thirst.

And then, with a leap, I was back to what we call reality—to the clicking needle, to the corner in wheat, to Chicago and Pittsburg and New York. In all this continent, I thought, in all the western world, there is not a human soul whose will seeks any peace at all, least of all the peace of God. All move, but about no centre; they move on, to more power, to more wealth, to more motion. There is not one of them who conceives that he has a place, if only he could find it, a rank and order fitted to his nature, higher than some, lower than others, but right, and the only right for him, his true position in the cosmic scheme, his ultimate relation to the Power whence it proceeds. Life, like astronomy, has become Copernican. It has no centre, no significance, or, if any, one beyond our ken. Gravitation drives us, not love. We are attracted and

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"Did we desire to be more aloft, our longings were discordant from his will who here assorteth us,

"And for that, thou wilt see, there is no room within these circles, if of necessity we have our being here in love, and if thou think again what is love s nature.

"Nay, 'tis the essence of this blessed being to hold ourselves within the divine will, whereby our own wills are themselves made one.

"So that our being thus, from threshold unto threshold, throughout the realm, is a joy to all the realm as to the King, who draweth our wills to what he willeth;

"And his will is our peace; it is that sea to which all moves that it createth and that nature maketh."

DANTE, *Purgatorio*, iii. 70–87 (trans. by Rev. Philip H. Wicksteed, in the "Temple Classics" edition).

repelled by a force we cannot control, a force that resides in our muscles and our nerves, not in our will and spirit. "Click — click — click — tick — tick — tick," so goes the economic clock. And that clock, with its silly face, has shut us out from the stars. It tells us the time; but behind the dial of the hours is now for us no vision of the solemn wheeling spheres, of spirit flames and that ultimate point of light "pinnacled dim in the intense inane." "America is a clock," I said; and then I remembered the phrase, "America is Niagara." And like a flake of foam, dizzy and lost, I was swept away, out into the infinite, out into unconsciousness.

The sun was shining brightly when I woke, and I had slept away my mood of the night. I took leave of my host, and under his directions, after half a mile along the line, plunged down into a gorge, and followed for miles, crossing and re-crossing, a mountain brook, between cliffs of red rocks, by fields of mauve anemones, in the shadow and fragrance of pines; till suddenly, after hours of rough going, I was confronted by a notice, set up, apparently, in the desert:

"Keep out. Avoid trouble. This means you."

I laughed. "Keep out!" I said. "If only there were a chance of my getting in!" "Avoid trouble! Ah, what trouble would I not face, could I but get in!"

And I went on, but not in, and met no trouble, and returned to the hotel, and had dinner, and watched for a solitary hour, in the hall, the shifting interminable array of vacant eyes and blank faces, and then retired to write this letter; "and so to bed."

VI

IN THE ADIRONDACKS

FOR the last few days I have been living in camp on a mountain lake in the Adirondacks. All about me are mountains and unlumbered forest. The tree lies where it falls; the undergrowth chokes the trails; and on the hottest day it is cool in the green, sun-chequered wilderness. Deer start in the thickets or steal down to drink in the lake. The only sounds are the woodpecker's scream, the song of the hermit-thrush, the thrumming and drumming of bull-frogs in the water. My friend is a sportsman; I am not; and while he catches trout I have been reading Homer and Shelley. Shelley I have always understood; but now, for the first time, I seem to understand Homer. Our guide here, I feel, might have been Homer, if he had had imagination; but he could never have been Shelley. Homer, I conceive, had from the first the normal bent for action. What his fellows did he too wanted to do. He learned to hunt, to sail a boat, to build a house, to use a spear and bow. He had his initiation early, in conflict, in danger, and in death. He loved the feast,

the dance, and the song. But also he had dreams. He used to sit alone and think. And, as he grew, these moods grew, till he came to live a second life, a kind of double of the first. The one was direct, unreflective, and purposeful. In it he hunted wild beasts that he might kill them, fought battles that he might win them, sailed boats that he might arrive somewhere. So far, he was like his fellows, and like our guide, with his quick observation, his varied experience, his practical skill. But then, on the other hand, he had imagination. This active life he reproduced; not by recapitulating it—that the guide can do; but by recreating it. He detached it, as it were, from himself as centre; ceased, indeed, to be a self; and became all that he contemplated—the victor and the vanquished, the hunter and the hunted, the house and its builder, Thersites and Achilles. He became the sun and the moon and the stars, the gods and the laughter of the gods. He took no sides, pronounced no judgment, espoused no cause. He became pure vision; but not passive vision. To see, he had to re-create; and the material his observation had amassed he offered up as a holocaust on the altar of his imagination. Fused in that fierce fire, like drew to like, parts ran together and formed a whole. Did he see a warrior fall? In a moment the image arose of "a stately poplar falling by the axe in a meadow by the riverside." Did a host move out to meet the foe? It recalled the

ocean shore where "wave follows wave far out at sea until they break in thunder on the beach." Was battle engaged? "The clash of the weapons rang like the din of woodcutters in the mountain-glades." Did a wounded hero fall? The combatants gathered about him "like flies buzzing round the brimming milk-pails in the spring." All commonest things, redeemed from isolation and irrelevance, revealed the significance with which they were charged. The result was the actual made real, a reflexion which was a disclosure, a reproduction which was a recreation. And if experience, as we know it, is the last word of life, if there is nothing beyond and nothing behind, if there is no meaning, no explanation, no purpose or end, then the poetry of Homer is the highest reach of human achievement.

For, observe, Homer is not a critic. His vision transmutes life, but does not transcend it. Experience is ultimate; all the poet does is to experience fully. Common men live, but do not realise life; he realises it. But he does not question it; it is there and it is final; glorious, lovely, august, terrible, sordid, cruel, unjust. And the partial, smiling, unmoved, unaccountable Olympians are the symbol of its brute actuality. Not only is there no explanation, there is not even a question to be asked. So it is, so it has been, so it will be. Homer's outlook is that of the modern realist. That he wrote an epic, and they novels, is an accident of time and space. Turgeneff or Balzac writing 1000 years

before Christ would have been Homer; and Homer, writing now, would have been Turgeneff or Balzac.

But Shelley could never have been Homer; for he was born a critic and a rebel. From the first dawn of consciousness he challenged and defied the works and ways of men and the apparent order of the universe. Never for a moment anywhere was he at home in the world. There was nothing attainable he cared to pursue, nothing actual he cared to represent. He could no more see what is called fact than he could act upon it. His eyes were dazzled by a different vision. Life and the world not only are intolerable to him, they are unreal. Beyond and behind lies Reality, and it is good. Now it is a Perfectibility lying in the future; now a Perfection existing eternally. In any case, whatever it be, however and wherever to be found, it is the sole object of his quest and of his song. Whatever of good or lovely or passionate gleams here and there, on the surface or in the depths of the actual, is a ray of that Sun, an image of that Beauty. His imagination is kindled by Appearance only to soar away from it. The landscape he depicts is all light, all fountains and caverns. The Beings with which it is peopled are discarnate Joys and Hopes; Justice and Liberty, Peace and Love and Truth. Among these only is he at home; in the world of men he is an alien captive; and Human Life presents itself as an "unquiet dream."

" 'Tis we that, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings."

When we die, we awake into Reality—that Reality to which, from the beginning, Shelley was consecrated :

" I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept my vow ? "

He calls it " intellectual Beauty " ; he impersonates it as Asia, and sings it in verse that passes beyond sense into music :

" Life of Life ! thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them ;
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire ; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light ! thy limbs are burning
Through the vest which seems to hide them ;
As the radiant lines of morning
Through the clouds ere they divide them ;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others ; none beholds thee,
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,

And the souls of whom thou lovest
  Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!"

This we call poetry; and we call the Iliad poetry. But the likeness is superficial, and the difference profound. Was it Homer or Shelley that grasped Reality? This is not a question of literary excellence; it is a question of the sense of life. And—oddly enough—it is a question to which the intellect has no answer. The life in each of us takes hold of it and answers it empirically. The normal man is Homeric, though he is not aware of the fact. Especially is the American Homeric; naïf, spontaneous, at home with fact, implicitly denying the Beyond. Is he right? This whole continent, the prairies, the mountains and the coast, the trams and trolleys, the sky-scrapers, the factories, elevators, automobiles, shout to that question one long deafening Yes. But there is another country that speaks a different tongue. Before America was, India is.

VII

THE RELIGION OF BUSINESS

IN the house in which I am staying hangs an old coloured print, representing two couples, one young and lusty, the other decrepit, the woman carrying an hour-glass, the man leaning on a stick ; and underneath, the following inscription :

" My father and mother that go so stuping to your grave,
Pray tell me what good I may in this world expect to have ? "

" My son, the good y° can expect is all forlorn,
Men doe not gather grapes from of a thorn."

This dialogue, I sometimes think, symbolises the attitude of the new world to the old, and the old to the new. Not seldom I feel among Americans as the Egyptian is said to have felt among the Greeks, that I am moving in a world of precocious and inexperienced children, bearing on my own shoulders the weight of the centuries. Yet it is not exactly that Americans strike one as young in spirit ; rather they strike one as undeveloped. It is as though they had never faced life and asked themselves what it is ; as though they

were so occupied in running that it has never occurred to them to inquire where they started and whither they are going. They seem to be always doing and never experiencing. A dimension of life, one would say, is lacking, and they live in a plane instead of in a solid. That missing dimension I shall call religion. Not that Americans do not, for aught I know, "believe" as much as or more than Europeans; but they appear neither to believe nor to disbelieve religiously. That, I admit, is true almost everywhere of the mass of the people. But even in Europe—and far more in India—there has always been, and still is, a minority who open windows to the stars; and through these windows, in passing, the plain man sometimes looks. The impression America makes on me is that the windows are blocked up. It has become incredible that this continent was colonised by the Pilgrim Fathers. That intense, narrow, unlovely but genuine spiritual life has been transformed into industrial energy; and this energy, in its new form, the churches, oddly enough, are endeavouring to recapture and use to drive their machines. Religion is becoming a department of practical business. The Churches—orthodox and unorthodox, old and new, Christian, Christian-Scientific, theosophic, higher-thinking—vie with one another in advertising goods which are all material benefits: "Follow me, and you will get rich," "Follow me, and you will get well," "Follow me, and you will be cheerful, prosperous,

successful." Religion in America is nothing if not practical. It does not concern itself with a life beyond; it gives you here and now what you want. "What *do* you want? Money? Come along!—Success? This is the shop!—Health? Here you are! Better than patent medicines!" The only part of the Gospels one would suppose that interests the modern American is the miracles; for the miracles really did *do* something. As for the Sermon on the Mount—well, no Westerner ever took that seriously.

This conversion of religion into business is interesting enough. But even more striking is what looks like a conversion of business into religion. Business is so serious that it sometimes assumes the shrill tone of a revivalist propaganda. There has recently been brought to my attention a circular addressed to the agents of an insurance society, urging them to rally round the firm, with a special effort, in what I can only call a "mission-month." I quote—with apologies to the unknown author—part of this production:

THE CALL TO ACTION.

"How about these beautiful spring days for hustling? Everything is on the move. New life and force is apparent everywhere. The man who can stand still when all creation is on the move is literally and hopelessly a dead one.

"These are ideal days for the insurance field-man.

Weather like this has a tremendously favourable effect on business. In the city and small town alike there is a genuine revival of business. The farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer, are beginning to work overtime. Spring is in the footstep of the ambitious man as well as in the onward march of nature. This is the day of growth, expansion, creation, and re-creation.

"Consciously or unconsciously every one responds to the glad call to new life and vigour. Men who are cold and selfish, who are literally frozen up the winter through, yield to the warm, invigorating, energising touch of spring.

"Gentlemen of the field force, now is the psychological moment to force your prospects to action as indicated by the dotted line. As in nature, some plants and trees are harder to force than others, so in the nature of human prospects, some are more difficult than others. Sunshine and rain will produce results in the field of life-underwriting.

"Will it not be possible for you during these five remaining days not only to increase the production from regular sources, but to go out into the highways and hedges and compel others to sign their applications, if for only a small amount?

"Everything is now in full swing, and we are going to close up the month

"IN A BLAZE OF GLORY."

Might not this almost as well have been an address

from the headquarters of the Salvation Army? And is not the following exactly parallel to a denunciation, from the mission-pulpit, of the unprofitable servant?

"A few days ago we heard of a general agent who has one of the largest and most prosperous territories in this country. He has been in the business for years, and yet that man, for some unknown reason, rather apologises for his vocation. He said he was a little ashamed of his calling. Such a condition is almost a crime, and I am sure that the men of the Eastern Department will say, that man ought to get out of the business.

"*Instead of being ashamed of his calling, he should be mortally ashamed of his not calling.*

"Are you happy in your work? If not, give it up and go into some business more to your liking."

WHY IS IT?

"So many times the question is asked, 'Why is it, and how is it, that Mr. So-and-so writes so much business? There is not a week but he procures new applications.' Gentlemen, there's but one answer to this question. There is a great gulf between the man who is in earnest and works persistently every day and the man who seems to be in earnest and makes believe he is working persistently every day.

"One of the most successful personal producers said

to the writer the other day: 'No wonder certain agents do not write more business. I couldn't accomplish very much either if I did not work longer hours than they do. Some insurance agents live like millionaires and keep bankers' hours. You cannot expect much business from efforts like that.' This man speaks from practical knowledge of the business. He has written

$147,500 *in personal business in the last six weeks.*

"It does seem rather strange, sometimes, that half of the men in the Eastern Department should be writing twice as much business as the other half. They are representing the same company; presenting the same propositions; are supposed to be talking to practically the same number of men; have the same rates, same guarantees, and the same twenty-four hours in each day, and yet are doing twice the business. In other words, making more money. What really makes this difference? I will tell you. They put heart into their work. There is an enthusiasm and earnestness about them that carries conviction. They are business through and through, and everybody knows it.

"Are you getting your share of applications? If some other agent is up early, wide-awake and alert, putting in from ten to fifteen hours per day, he is bound to do business, isn't he? This is a plain, every-day horse-sense business fact. No one has a patent on time or the

use of it. To work and to succeed is common property. It is your capital, and the use of it will determine your worth."

I think, really, this is one of the most remarkable documents that could be produced in evidence of the character of American civilisation. There is all the push, initiative, and enterprise on which they justly pride themselves; there is also the reduction of all values to terms of business, the concentration of what, at other times, have been moral and religious forces upon the one aim of material progress. In such an atmosphere it is easy to see how those who care for spiritual values are led to protest that these are really material; to pack up their goods, so to speak, as if they were biscuits or pork, and palm them off in that guise on an unsuspecting public. In a world where every one is hustling, the Churches feel they must hustle too; when all the firms advertise, they must advertise too; when only one thing is valued, power, they must pretend they can offer power; they must go into business, because business is going into religion!

It is a curious spectacle! How long will it last? How real is it, even now? That withered couple, I half believe, hanging on the wall, descend at night and wander through the land, whispering to all the sleepers their disquieting warning; and all day long there hovers at the back of the minds of these

active men a sense of discomfort which, if it became articulate, might express itself in the ancient words:

> "My son, the good y^{o} can expect is all forlorn,
> Men doe not gather grapes from of a thorn."

VIII

RED-BLOODS AND "MOLLYCODDLES"

I AM staying at a pleasant place in New Hampshire. The country is hilly and wooded, like a larger and wilder Surrey; and through it flows what, to an Englishman, seems a large river, the Connecticut. Charming villas are dotted about, well designed and secluded in pretty gardens. I mention this because, in my experience of America, it is unique. Almost everywhere the houses stare blankly at one another and at the public roads, ugly, unsheltered, and unashamed, as much as to say, "Every one is welcome to see what goes on here. We court publicity. See how we eat, drink, and sleep. Our private life is the property of the American poeple." It was not, however, to describe the country that I began this letter, but to elaborate a generalisation developed by my host and myself as a kind of self-protection against the gospel of "strenuousness."

We have divided men into Red-bloods and Mollycoddles. "A Red-blood man" is a phrase which explains itself, "Mollycoddle" is its opposite. We have adopted it from a famous speech of Mr. Roosevelt,

and redeemed it—perverted it, if you will—to other uses. A few examples will make the notion clear. Shakespeare's Henry V. is a typical Red-blood; so was Bismarck; so was Palmerston; so is almost any business man. On the other hand, typical Mollycoddles were Socrates, Voltaire, and Shelley. The terms, you will observe, are comprehensive, and the types very broad. Generally speaking, men of action are Red-bloods. Not but what the Mollycoddle may act, and act efficiently. But, if so, he acts from principle, not from the instinct of action. The Red-blood, on the other hand, acts as the stone falls, and does indiscriminately anything that comes to hand. It is thus he that carries on the business of the world. He steps without reflection into the first place offered him and goes to work like a machine. The ideals and standards of his family, his class, his city, his country and his age, he swallows as naturally as he swallows food and drink. He is therefore always "in the swim"; and he is bound to "arrive," because he has set before himself the attainable. You will find him everywhere in all the prominent positions. In a military age he is a soldier, in a commercial age a business man. He hates his enemies, and he may love his friends; but he does not require friends to love. A wife and children he does require, for the instinct to propagate the race is as strong in him as all other instincts. His domestic life, however, is not always happy; for he can seldom

understand his wife. This is part of his general incapacity to understand any point of view but his own. He is incapable of an idea and contemptuous of a principle. He is the Samson, the blind force, dearest to Nature of her children. He neither looks back nor looks ahead. He lives in present action. And when he can no longer act, he loses his reason for existence. The Red-blood is happiest if he dies in the prime of life; otherwise, he may easily end with suicide. For he has no inner life; and when the outer life fails, he can only fail with it. The instinct that animated him being dead, he dies too. Nature, who has blown through him, blows elsewhere. His stops are dumb; he is dead wood on the shore.

The Mollycoddle, on the other hand, is all inner life. He may indeed act, as I said, but he acts, so to speak, by accident; just as the Red-blood may reflect, but reflects by accident. The Mollycoddle in action is the Crank: it is he who accomplishes reforms; who abolished slavery, for example, and revolutionised prisons and lunatic asylums. Still, primarily, the Mollycoddle is a critic, not a man of action. He challenges all standards and all facts. If an institution is established, that is a reason why he will not accept it; if an idea is current, that is a reason why he should repudiate it. He questions everything, including life and the universe. And for that reason Nature hates him. On the Red-blood she heaps her favours; she gives

him a good digestion, a clear complexion, and sound nerves. But to the Mollycoddle she apportions dyspepsia and black bile. In the universe and in society the Mollycoddle is "out of it" as inevitably as the Red-blood is "in it." At school, he is a "smug" or a "swat," while the Red-blood is captain of the Eleven. At college, he is an "intellectual," while the Red-blood is in the "best set." In the world he courts failure while the Red-blood achieves success. The Red-blood sees nothing; but the Mollycoddle sees through everything. The Red-blood joins societies; the Mollycoddle is a non-joiner. Individualist of individualists, he can only stand alone, while the Red-blood requires the support of a crowd. The Mollycoddle engenders ideas, and the Red-blood exploits them. The Mollycoddle discovers, and the Red-blood invents. The whole structure of civilisation rests on foundations laid by Mollycoddles; but all the building is done by Red-bloods. The Red-blood despises the Mollycoddle; but, in the long run, he does what the Mollycoddle tells him. The Mollycoddle also despises the Red-blood, but he cannot do without him. Each thinks he is master of the other, and, in a sense, each is right. In his lifetime the Mollycoddle may be the slave of the Red-blood; but after his death, he is his master, though the Red-blood know it not.

Nations, like men, may be classified roughly as Red-blood and Mollycoddle. To the latter class belong

clearly the ancient Greeks, the Italians, the French, and probably the Russians; to the former the Romans, the Germans, and the English. But the Red-blood nation *par excellence* is the American; so that, in comparison with them, Europe as a whole might almost be called Mollycoddle. This characteristic of Americans is reflected in the predominant physical type,—the great jaw and chin, the huge teeth, and predatory mouth; in their speech, where beauty and distinction are sacrificed to force; in their need to live and feel and act in masses. To be born a Mollycoddle in America is to be born to a hard fate. You must either emigrate or succumb. This, at least, hitherto has been the alternative practised. Whether a Mollycoddle will ever be produced strong enough to breathe the American atmosphere and live, is a crucial question for the future. It is the question whether America will ever be civilised. For civilisation, you will have perceived, depends on a just balance of Red-bloods and Mollycoddles. Without the Red-blood there would be no life at all, no stuff, so to speak, for the Mollycoddle to work upon; without the Mollycoddle, the stuff would remain shapeless and chaotic. The Red-blood is the matter, the Mollycoddle the form; the Red-blood the dough, the Mollycoddle the yeast. On these two poles turns the orb of human society. And if, at this point, you choose to say that poles are points and have no dimensions, that strictly neither the Mollycoddle nor

the Red-blood exist, and that real men contain elements of both mixed in different proportions, I have no quarrel with you except such as one has with the man who states the obvious. I am satisfied to have distinguished the ideal extremes between which the Actual vibrates. The detailed application of the conception I must leave to more patient researchers.

One point more before I close. This Dichotomy, so far as I can see, applies only to man. Woman appears to be a kind of hybrid. Regarded as a creature of instinct, she resembles the Red-blood, and it is to him that she is first attracted. The hero of her youth is the athlete, the soldier, the successful man of business; and this predilection of hers accounts for much of human history, and in particular for the maintenance of the military spirit. On the other hand, as a creature capable of and craving sympathy, she has affinities with the Mollycoddle. This dual nature is the tragedy of her life. The Red-blood awakens her passion, but cannot satisfy it. He wins her by his virility, but cannot retain her by his perception. Hence the fact, noted by a cynic, that it is the Mollycoddle who cuckolds the Red-blood. For the woman, married to the Red-blood, discovers too late that she is to him only a trophy, a scalp. He hangs her up in the hall, and goes about his business. Then comes the Mollycoddle, divining all, possessing and offering all. And if the Red-blood is an American, and the Mollycoddle

an European, then the situation is tense indeed. For the American Red-blood despises woman in his heart as profoundly as he respects her in outer observance. He despises her because of the Mollycoddle he divines in her. Therefore he never understands her; and that is why European Mollycoddles carry off American women before the very eyes of the exasperated Red-blood. "Am I not clean?" he cries. "Am I not healthy? Am I not athletic and efficient?" He is, but it does not help him, except with young girls. He may win the body; but he cannot win the soul. Can it be true then that most women would like two husbands, one Red-blood, the other Mollycoddle, one to be the father of their children, the other to be the companion of their souls? Women alone can answer; and, for the first time in history, they are beginning to be articulate.

IX

ADVERTISEMENT

THE last two days and nights I spent in a railway train. We passed through some beautiful country; that, I believe, is the fact; but my feeling is that I have emerged from a nightmare. In my mind is a jumbled vision of huge wooden cows cut out in profile and offering from dry udders a fibrous milk; of tins of biscuits portrayed with a ghastly realism of perspective, and mendaciously screaming that I needed them—U-need-a biscuit; of gigantic quakers, multiplied as in an interminable series of mirrors and offering me a myriad meals of indigestible oats; of huge painted bulls in a kind of discontinuous frieze bellowing to the heavens a challenge to produce a better tobacco than theirs; of the head of a gentleman, with pink cheeks and a black moustache, recurring, like a decimal, *ad infinitum* on the top of a board, to inform me that his beauty is the product of his own toilet powder; of cod-fish without bones—"the kind you have always bought"; of bacon packed in glass jars; of whiz suspenders, sen-sen throat-ease, sure-fit hose, and the whole army

of patent medicines. By river, wood, and meadow, hamlet or city, mountain or plain, hovers and flits this obscene host; never to be escaped from, never to be forgotten, fixing, with inexorable determination, a fancy that might be tempted to roam to that one fundamental fact of life, the operation of the bowels.

Nor, of course, are these incubi, these ghostly emanations of the One God Trade, confined to the American continent. They haunt with equal pertinacity the lovelier landscapes of England; they line the route to Venice; they squat on the Alps and float on the Rhine; they are beginning to occupy the very air, and with the advent of the air-ship, will obliterate the moon and the stars, and scatter over every lonely moor and solitary mountain peak memorials of the stomach, of the liver and the lungs. Never, in effect, says modern business to the soul of man, never and nowhere shall you forget that you are nothing but a body; that you require to eat, to salivate, to digest, to evacuate; that you are liable to arthritis, blood-poisoning, catarrh, colitis, calvity, constipation, consumption, diarrhœa, diabetes, dysmenorrhœa, epilepsy, eczema, fatty degeneration, gout, goitre, gastritis, headache, hæmorrhage, hysteria, hypertrophy, idiocy, indigestion, jaundice, lockjaw, melancholia, neuralgia, ophthalmia, phthisis, quinsey, rheumatism, rickets, sciatica, syphilis, tonsilitis, tic douloureux, and so on to the end of the alphabet and back again to the beginning. Never and nowhere

shall you forget that you are a trading animal, buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. Never shall you forget that nothing matters—nothing in the whole universe—except the maintenance and extension of industry; that beauty, peace, harmony are not commercial values, and cannot be allowed for a moment to stand in the way of the advance of trade; that nothing, in short, matters except wealth, and that there is no wealth except money in the pocket. This —did it ever occur to you—is the real public education every country is giving, on every hoarding and sky-sign, to its citizens of every age, at every moment of their lives. And that being so, is it not a little ironical that children should be taught for half an hour in school to read a poem of Wordsworth or a play of Shakespeare, when for the rest of the twenty-four hours there is being photographed on their minds the ubiquitous literature of Owbridge and of Carter?

But of course advertisement cannot be interfered with! It is the life-blood of the nation. All traders, all politicians, all journalists say so. They sometimes add that it is really, to an unprejudiced spirit, beautiful and elevating. Thus only this morning I came across an article in a leading New York newspaper, which remarks that: "The individual advertisement is commonly in good taste, both in legend and in illustration. Many are positively beautiful; and, as a wit has truly said, the cereal advertisements in the magazines are

far more interesting than the serial stories." This latter statement I can easily believe; but when I read the former there flitted across my mind a picture of a lady lightly clad reclining asleep against an open window, a full moon rising in the distance over a lake, with the legend attached, "Cascarella—it works while you sleep."

The article from which I have quoted is interesting not only as illustrating the diversity of taste, but as indicating the high degree of development which has now been attained by what is at once the art and the science of advertisement. "The study of advertisement," it begins, "seems to have a perennial charm for the American public. Hardly a month passes but some magazine finds a new and inviting phase of this modern art to lay before its readers. The solid literature of advertisement is also growing rapidly. . . . The technique of the subject is almost as extensive as that of scientific agriculture. Whole volumes have been compiled on the art of writing advertisements. Commercial schools and colleges devote courses of study to the subject. Indeed the corner-stone of the curriculum of a well-known business college is an elective upon 'Window-dressing.'" That you may be under no misapprehension, I must add that this article appears in what is admittedly the most serious and respectable of the New York newspapers; and that it is not conceived in the spirit of irony or hyperbole. To the

American, advertisement is a serious, important, and elevating department of business, and those who make it their speciality endeavour to base their operations on a profound study of human nature. One of these gentlemen has expounded, in a book which has a wide circulation, the whole philosophy of his liberal profession. He calls the book "Imagination in Business"[1]; and I remark incidentally that the use of the word "imagination," like that of "art," in this connection, shows where the inquirer ought to look for the manifestation, on this continent, of the æsthetic spirit. "The imaginative man," says the writer, "sends his thought through all the instincts, passions, and prejudices of men, he knows their desires and their regrets, he knows every human weakness and its sure decoy." It is this latter clause that is relevant to his theme. Poets in earlier ages wrote epics and dramas, they celebrated the strength and nobility of men; but the poet of the modern world "cleverly builds on the frailties of mankind." Of these the chief is "the inability to throw away an element of value, even though it cannot be utilised." On this great principle is constructed the whole art and science of advertisement. And my author proceeds to give a series of illustrations, "each of which is an actual fact, either in my experience, or of which I have been cognisant." Space and copyright forbid me to quote. I must refer the reader to the

[1] *Imagination in Business* (Harper & Brothers).

original source. Nowhere else will be found so lucid an expression of the whole theory and practice of modern trade. That theory and practice is being taught in schools of commerce throughout the Union; and there are many, I suppose, who would like to see it taught in English universities. But, really, does anyone—does any man of business—think it a better education than Greek?

X

CULTURE

SCENE, a club in a Canadian city; persons, a professor, a doctor, a business man, and a traveller (myself). Wine, cigars, anecdotes; and suddenly, popping up, like a Jack-in-the-box absurdly crowned with ivy, the intolerable subject of education. I do not remember how it began; but I know there came a point at which, before I knew where I was, I found myself being assailed on the subject of Oxford and Cambridge. Not, however, in the way you may anticipate. Those ancient seats of learning were not denounced as fossilised, effete, and corrupt. On the contrary, I was pressed, urged, implored almost with tears in the eye—to reform them? No! to let them alone!

"For heaven's sake, keep them as they are! You don't know what you've got, and what you might lose! We know! We've had to do without it! And we know that without it everything else is of no avail. We bluster and brag about education on this side of the Atlantic. But in our heart of hearts we know that

we have missed the one thing needful, and that you, over in England, have got it."

"And that one thing?"

"Is Culture! Yes, in spite of Matthew Arnold, Culture, and Culture, and always Culture!"

"Meaning by Culture?"

"Meaning Aristotle instead of Agriculture, Homer instead of Hygiene, Shakespeare instead of the Stock Exchange, Bacon instead of Banking, Plato instead of Pædagogics! Meaning intellect before intelligence, thought before dexterity, discovery before invention! Meaning the only thing that is really practical, ideas; and the only thing that is really human, the Humanities!"

Rather apologetically, I began to explain. At Oxford, I said, no doubt the Humanities still hold the first place. But at Cambridge they have long been relegated to the second or the third. There we have schools of Natural Science, of Economics, of Engineering, of Agriculture. We have even a Training College in Pædagogics. Their faces fell, and they renewed their passionate appeal.

"Stop it," they cried. "For heaven's sake, stop it! In all those things we've got you skinned alive over here! If you want Agriculture go to Wisconsin! If you want Medicine, go to the Rockefeller Institute! If you want Engineering, go to Pittsburg! But preserve still for the English-speaking world what you alone can give! Preserve liberal culture! Preserve the Classics! Preserve Mathematics! Preserve the

seed-ground of all practical inventions and appliances! Preserve the integrity of the human mind!"

Interesting, is it not? These gentlemen, no doubt, were not typical Canadians. But they were not the least intelligent men I have met on this continent. And when they had finally landed me in my sleeping-berth in the train, and I was left to my own reflections in that most uncomfortable of all situations, I began to consider how odd it was that in matters educational we are always endeavouring to reform the only part of our system that excites the admiration of foreigners.

I do not intend, however, to plunge into that controversy. The point that interests me is the view of my Canadian friends that in America there is no "culture." And, in the sense they gave to that term, I think they are right. There *is* no culture in America. There is instruction; there is research; there is technical and professional training; there is specialisation in science and industry; there is every possible application of life, to purposes and ends; but there is no life for its own sake. Let me illustrate. It is, I have read, a maxim of American business that "a man is damned who knows two things." "He is almost a dilettante," it was said of a student, "he reads Dante and Shakespeare"! "The perfect professor," said a College President, "should be willing to work hard eleven months in the year.' These are straws, if you like, but they show the way the wind blows. Again, you will find,

if you travel long in America, that you are suffering from a kind of atrophy. You will not, at first, realise what it means. But suddenly it will flash upon you that you are suffering from lack of conversation. You do not converse; you cannot; you can only talk. It is the rarest thing to meet a man who, when a subject is started, is willing or able to follow it out into its ramifications, to play with it, to embroider it with pathos or with wit, to penetrate to its roots, to trace its connexions and affinities. Question and answer, anecdote and jest are the staple of American conversation; and, above all, information. They have a hunger for positive facts. And you may hear them hour after hour rehearsing to one another their travels, their business transactions, their experiences in trains, in hotels, on steamers, till you begin to feel you have no alternatives before you but murder or suicide. An American, broadly speaking, never detaches himself from experience. His mind is embedded in it; it moves wedged in fact. His only escape is into humour; and even his humour is but a formula of exaggeration. It implies no imagination, no real envisaging of its object. It does not illuminate a subject, it extinguishes it, clamping upon every topic the same grotesque mould. That is why it does not really much amuse the English. For the English are accustomed to Shakespeare, and to the London cabby.

This may serve to indicate what I mean by lack

of culture. I admit, of course, that neither are the English cultured. But they have culture among them. They do not, of course, value it; the Americans, for aught I know, value it more; but they produce it, and the Americans do not. I have visited many of their colleges and universities, and everywhere, except perhaps at Harvard—unless my impressions are very much at fault—I have found the same atmosphere. It is the atmosphere known as the "Yale spirit," and it is very like that of an English Public School. It is virile, athletic, gregarious, all-penetrating, all-embracing. It turns out the whole university to sing rhythmic songs and shout rhythmic cries at football matches. It praises action and sniffs at speculation. It exalts morals and depresses intellect. It suspects the solitary person, the dreamer, the loafer, the poet, the prig. This atmosphere, of course, exists in English universities. It is imported there from the Public Schools. But it is not all-pervading. Individuals and cliques escape. And it is those who escape that acquire culture. In America, no one escapes, or they are too few to count. I know Americans of culture, know and love them; but I feel them to be lost in the sea of philistinism. They cannot draw together, as in England, and leaven the lump. The lump is bigger, and they are fewer. All the more honour to them; and all the more loss to America.

Whether, from all this, any conclusion is to be drawn about the proper policy to be pursued at our univer-

sities, is a question I will not here discuss. Culture, I think, is one of those precious things that are achieved by accident, and by accident may be destroyed. The things we do to maintain it might kill it; the things we do to kill it might preserve it. My Canadian friends may be quite wrong in their diagnosis of the causes that engender or destroy it. But they are right in their sense of its importance; and it will be an interesting result of imperial unity if we find, to our astonishment, that the Dominions beyond the seas rally round exactly those things in England which we expect them to declare effete. The Rhodes scholars go to Oxford, not to Birmingham or Liverpool. And it is Cambridge that peoples the universities of the Empire with professors.

XI

ANTÆUS

I SAW to-day some really remarkable landscapes by an American artist. So, at least, they seem to me. They have, at any rate, a quality of imagination which one does not expect to find in this country. "One does not expect"—why not? Why, in this respect, is America, as undoubtedly she is, so sterile? Artists must be born here as much as elsewhere. American civilisation, it is true, repels men of reflection and sensitiveness, just as it attracts men of action; so that, as far as immigration is concerned, there is probably a selection working against the artistic type. But, on the other hand, men of action often produce sons with a genius for the arts; and it is to be supposed that they do so as much in America as elsewhere. It must be the environment that is unfavourable. Artists and poets belong to the genus I have named "Mollycoddle"; and in America the Mollycoddle is hardly allowed to breathe. Nowhere on that continent, so far as I have been able to see, is there to be found a class or a clique of men, respected by others and

respecting themselves, who also respect not merely art but the artistic calling. Broadly, business is the only respectable pursuit; including under business Politics and Law, which in this country are only departments of business. Business holds the place in popular esteem that is held by arms in Germany, by letters in France, by Public Life in England. The man therefore whose bent is towards the arts meets no encouragement; he meets everywhere the reverse. His father, his uncles, his brothers, his cousins, all are in business. Business is the only virile pursuit for people of education and means, who cannot well become chauffeurs. There is, no doubt, the professorial career; but that, it is agreed, is adopted only by men of "no ambition." Americans believe in education, but they do not believe in educators. There is no money to be made in that profession, and the making of money is the test of character. The born poet or artist is thus handicapped to a point which may easily discourage him from running at all. At the best, he emigrates to Europe, and his achievement is credited to that continent. Or, remaining in America, he succumbs to the environment, puts aside his creative ambition, and enters business. It is not for nothing that Americans are the most active people in the world. They pay the penalty in an atrophy of the faculties of reflection and representation.

Things are different in Europe, and even in England.

There, not only are artists and men of letters honoured when they are successful—they are, of course, honoured at that stage in America; but the pursuit of literature and art is one which a young man need not feel it discreditable to adopt. The contemporaries of a brilliant youth at Oxford or at Cambridge do not secretly despise him if he declines to enter business. The first-class man does not normally aspire to start life as a drummer. Public life and the Church offer honourable careers; and both of them have traditional affinities with literature. So has the Law, still in England a profession and not a trade. One may even be a don or a schoolmaster without serious discredit. Under these conditions a young man can escape from the stifling pressure of the business point of view. He can find societies like-minded with himself, equally indifferent to the ideal of success in business, equally inspired by intellectual or æsthetic ambitions. He can choose to be poor without feeling that he will therefore become despicable. The attitude of the business classes in England, no doubt, is much the same as that of the business classes in America. But in England there are other classes and other traditions, havens of refuge from the prevalent commercialism. In America the trade-wind blows broad, steady, universal over the length and breadth of the continent.

This, I believe, is one reason for the sterility of America in Art. But it is not the only one. Litera-

ture and Art in Europe rest on a long tradition which has not only produced books and pictures, but has left its mark on the language, the manners, the ideas, the architecture, the physical features of the country. The books and the pictures can be transplanted, but the rest cannot. Thus, even though in every art the technical tradition has been interrupted, there remains in Europe what I will call the tradition of feeling; and it is this that is absent in America. Art in Europe is rooted; and there still persists into the present something of the spirit which fostered it in the past. Not only is Nature beautiful, she is humanised by the works of Man. Politics are mellowed by history, business tempered by culture. Classes are more segregated, types more distinct, ideals and aims more varied. The ghost of a spiritual life still hovers over the natural, shadowing it with the beat of solemn wings. There are finer overtones for a sensitive ear to catch; rainbow hues where the spray of life goes up. All this, it is true, is disappearing in Europe; but in America it has never existed. A sensitive European, travelling there, feels at once starved and flayed. Nothing nourishes, and everything hurts. There is natural beauty, but it has not been crowned and perfected by the hand of man. Whatever he has touched he has touched only to defile. There is one pursuit, commerce; one type, the business man; one ideal, that of increasing wealth. Monotony of talk, monotony of ideas, monotony of aim, monotony

of outlook on the world. America is industrialism pure and simple; Europe is industrialism superimposed on feudalism; and, for the arts, the difference is vital.

But the difference is disappearing. Not that America is becoming like Europe, but Europe is becoming like America. This is not a case of the imitation that is a form of flattery; it is a case of similar causes producing similar results. The disease—or shall we say, to use a neutral term—the diathesis of commercialism found in America an open field and swept through it like a fire. In Europe, its course was hampered by the structures of an earlier civilisation. But it is spreading none the less surely. And the question arises—In the future, when the European environment is as unfavourable to Art as the American, will there be, in the West, any Art at all? I do not know; no one knows; but there is this to remark. What I am calling commercialism is the infancy, not the maturity of a civilisation. The revolution in morals, in manners, and in political and social institutions which must accompany the revolution in industry, has hardly yet begun its course. It has gone further in Europe than in America; so that, oddly enough, Europe is at once behind and in front of this continent, overlaps it, so to speak, at both ends. But it has not gone very far even in Europe; and for generations, I conceive, political and social issues will draw away much of the creative talent that might have been available for Art. In the end, one may suppose,

something like a stable order will arise; an order, that is, in which people will feel that their institutions correspond sufficiently with their inner life, and will be able to devote themselves with a free mind to reflecting their civilisation in Art.

But will their civilisation be of a kind to invite such reflection? It will be, if the present movement is not altogether abortive, a civilisation of security, equity, and peace; where there is no indigence, no war, and comparatively little disease. Such society, certainly, will not offer a field for much of the kind of Art that has been or is now being produced. The primitive folk-song, the epic of war, the novel or play inspired by social strife, will have passed irrecoverably away. And more than that, it is sometimes urged, there will be such a dearth of those tense moments which alone engender the artistic mood, that Art of any kind will have become impossible. If that were true, it would not, in my opinion, condemn the society. Art is important, but there are things more important; and among those things are justice and peace. I do not, however, accept the view that a peaceable and just society would necessarily also be one that is uninspired. That view seems to me to proceed from our incurable materialism. We think there is no conflict except with arms; no rivalry except for bread; no aspiration except for money and rank. It is my own belief that the removal of the causes of the material strife in which

most men are now plunged would liberate the energies for spiritual conflict; that the passion to know, the passion to feel, the passion to love, would begin at last to take their proper place in human life; and would engender the forms of Art appropriate to their expression.

To return to America, what I am driving at is this. America may have an Art, and a great Art. But it will be after she has had her social revolution. Her Art has first to touch ground; and before it can do that, the ground must be fit for it to touch. It was not till the tenth century that the seed of Mediæval Art could be sown; it was not till the thirteenth that the flower bloomed. So now, our civilisation is not ripe for its own Art. What America imports from Europe is useless to her. It is torn from its roots; and it is idle to replant it; it will not grow. There must be a native growth, not so much of America, as of the modern era. That growth America, like Europe, must will. She has her prophet of it, Walt Whitman. In the coming centuries it is her work to make his vision real.

is, in brief, a Western movement, a Western problem, a Western mentality; and the particular happenings of particular nations are all parts of this one happening. Nor is this all. There is in the West a common religion. I do not refer to Christianity, for the religion I mean is held by hundreds and thousands who are not Christians, and indeed does not very readily find in Christianity an expression at once coherent and pure. It has not been formulated in a creed; but it is to be felt and heard in all the serious work and all the serious thought of the West. It is the religion of Good and Evil, of Time and the process in Time. If it tried to draw up a confession of faith perhaps it would produce, as its first attempt, something of this kind:—

"I believe in the ultimate distinction between Good and Evil, and in a real process in a real Time. I believe it to be my duty to increase Good and diminish Evil; I believe that in doing this I am serving the purpose of the world. I know this; I do not know anything else; and I am reluctant to put questions to which I have no answer, and to which I do not believe that anyone has an answer. Action, as defined above, is my creed. Speculation weakens action. I do not wish to speculate, I wish to live. And I believe the true life to be the life I have described."

In saying that this is the real creed of the modern Western man I do not pretend that he always knows or

would admit it to be so. But if his actions, his words, and his thoughts be sympathetically interpreted, where all are at their best, I think they will be found to imply something of this kind. And this attitude I call religious, not merely ethical, because of its conviction that the impulse towards Good is of the essence of the World, not only of men, or of Man. To believe this is an act of faith, not of reason; though it is not contrary to reason, as no faith should be or long can be Many men do *not* believe it, for many are not religious; others, while believing it, may believe also many other things. But it is the irreducible minimum of religion in the modern West, the justification of our life, the faith of our works. I call it the Religion of Time, and distinguish it thus from the Religion of Eternity.

In this sense, then, this profound sense, of a common aim and a common motive, there is really a West. Is there also an East? That is not so clear. In some important respects, no doubt, the Eastern civilisations are alike. They are still predominantly agricultural. Their industry is manual not mechanical. Their social unit is the extended family. To travel in the East is to realise that life on the soil and in the village is there still the normal life, as it has been almost everywhere and always, throughout civilisation, until the last century in the West. But though there is thus in the East a common way of life, there is not a common organisation nor a common spirit. Economically, the great Eastern

countries are still independent of one another. Each lives for the most part by and on itself. And their intellectual and spiritual intercourse is now (though it was not in the past) as negligible as their economic commerce. The influence that is beginning to be strong upon them all is that of Western culture; and if they become alike in their outlook on life, it will be by assimilating that. But, at present, they are not alike. It is easy, in this matter, to be deceived by the outward forms of religion. Because Buddhism originated in India and spread to China and Japan, because Japan took Confucian ideals from China, it is natural to conclude that there is a common religious spirit throughout the East, or the Far East. But one might as reasonably infer that the spirit of the christianised Teutons was the same as that of the Jews or of the Christians in the East. Nations borrow religions, but they shape them according to their own genius. And if I am not very much mistaken the outlook of India is, and always has been, radically distinct from and even opposed to that of China or Japan. These latter countries, indeed, I believe, are far closer to the West than they are to India. Let me explain.

India is the true origin and home of what I have called the religion of Eternity. That idea seems to have gone out from her to the rest of the world. But nowhere else was it received with equal purity and passion. Elsewhere than in India the claims of Time

were predominant. In India they have been subordinate. This, no doubt, is a matter of emphasis. No society, as a whole, could believe and act upon the belief that activity in Time is simply waste of time, and absorption in the Eternal the direct and immediate object of life. Such a view, acted upon, would bring the society quickly to an end. It would mean that the very physical instinct to live was extinguished. But, as the Eternal was first conceived by the amazing originality of India, so the passion to realise it here and now has been the motive of her saints from the date of the Upanishads to the twentieth century. And the method of realisation proposed and attempted has not been the living of the temporal life in a particular spirit, it has been the transcending of it by a special experience. Indian saints have always believed that by meditation and ascetic discipline, by abstaining from active life and all its claims, and cultivating solitude and mortification, they could reach by a direct experience union with the Infinite. This is as true of the latest as of the earliest saints, if and so far as Western influences have been excluded. Let me illustrate from the words of Sri Ramakrishna, one of the most typical of Indian saints, who died late in the nineteenth century.

First, for the claim to pass directly into union with the Eternal:

"I do see that Being as a Reality before my very eyes! Why then should I reason? I do actually see

that it is the Absolute Who has become all these things about us; it is He who appears as the finite soul and the phenomenal world. One must have such an awakening of the Spirit within to see this Reality. . . . Spiritual awakening must be followed by Samadhi. In this state one forgets that one has a body; one loses all attachment to things of this world."[1]

And let it not be supposed that this state called Samadhi is merely one of intense meditation. It is something much more abnormal, or super-normal, than this. The book from which I am quoting contains many accounts of its effects upon Sri Ramakrishna. Here is one of them:

"He is now in a state of Samadhi, the superconscious or God-conscious state. The body is again motionless. The eyes are again fixed! The boys only a moment ago were laughing and making merry! Now they all look grave. Their eyes are steadfastly fixed on the master's face. They marvel at the wonderful change that has come over him. It takes him long to come back to the sense world. His limbs now begin to lose their stiffness. His face beams with smiles, the organs of sense begin to come back each to its own work. Tears of joy stand at the corners of his eyes. He chants the sacred name of Rama."[2]

[1] *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, second edition, Part I., p. 310.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

CONCLUDING ESSAY

The object, then, of this saint, and one he claims to have attained, is to come into union with the Infinite by a process which removes him altogether from contact with this world and from all possibility of action in it. This world, in fact, is to him, as to all Indian saints and most Indian philosophers, phenomenal and unreal. Of the speculative problems raised by this conception I need not speak here. But it belongs to my purpose to bring out its bearing upon conduct. All conduct depends upon the conception of Good and Evil. Anti-moralists, like Nietzsche, assume and require these ideas, just as much as moralists; they merely attempt to give them a new content. If conduct is to have any meaning, Good and Evil must be real in a real world. If they are held to be appearances conduct becomes absurd. What now is Sri Ramakrishna's view of this matter? The whole life that we Western men call real is to him a mere game played by and for the sake of God, or, to use his phrase, of the Divine Mother. For her pleasure she keeps men bound to Time, instead of free in Eternity. For her pleasure, therefore, she creates and maintains Evil. I quote the passage:

"My Divine Mother is always in Her sportive mood. The world, indeed, is Her toy. She will have Her own way. It is Her pleasure to take out of the prison-house and set free only one or two among a hundred thousand of her children!

"*A Brahmo:* Sir, She can if She pleases set every-

body free. Why is it then, that She has bound us hand and foot with the chains of the world?

"*Sri Ramakrishna :* Well, I suppose it is her pleasure. It is her pleasure to go on with Her sport with all these beings that She has brought into existence. The player amongst the children that touches the person of the Grand-dame, the same need no longer run about. He cannot take any further part in the exciting play of Hide and Seek that goes on.

"The others who have not touched the goal must run about and play to the great delight of the Grand-dame." [1]

Thus the Indian saint. Let us now try to bring his conception into relation with what we in the West believe to be real experience. In a railway accident a driver is pinned against the furnace and slowly burned to death, praying the bystanders in vain to put him out of his misery. What is this? It is the sport of God! In Putumayo innocent natives are deprived of their land, enslaved, tortured, and murdered, that share-holders in Europe may receive high dividends. What is this? The sport of God! In the richest countries of the West a great proportion of those who produce the wealth receive less than the wages which would suffice to keep them in bare physical health. What is this? Once more the sport of God! One might multiply examples, but it would be idle. No Western man could for a moment entertain the view of Sri

[1] *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, second edition, Part I., p. 145.

Ramakrishna. To him such a God would be a mere devil. The Indian position, no doubt, is a form of idealism; but an idealism conditioned by defective experience of the life in Time. The saint has chosen another experience. But clearly he has not transcended ours, he has simply left it out.

Now I am aware that it will be urged by some of the most sincere representatives of religion in India that Srí Ramakrishna does not typify the Indian attitude. Perhaps not, if we take contemporary India. But then contemporary India has been profoundly influenced by Western thought; modern Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Rabindranath Tagore, could hardly have thought and felt as they did, and do, were it not for this influence. The following poem of Rabindranath Tagore may aptly symbolise this breaking in of the West upon the East, though I do not know that that was the author's intention:

> " With days of hard travail I raised a temple. It had no doors or windows, its walls were thickly built with massive stones.
> I forgot all else, I shunned all the world, I gazed in rapt contemplation at the image I had set upon the altar.
> It was always night inside, and lit by the lamps of perfumed oil. The ceaseless smoke of incense wound my heart in its heavy coils.
> Sleepless, I carved on the walls fantastic figures in mazy bewildering lines—winged horses, flowers with human faces, women with limbs like serpents.

No passage was left anywhere through which could enter the song of birds, the murmur of leaves, or the hum of the busy village.
The only sound that echoed in its dark dome was that of incantations which I chanted.
My mind became keen and still like a pointed flame, my senses swooned in ecstasy.
I knew not how time passed till the thunderstone had struck the temple, and a pain stung me through the heart.
The lamp looked pale and ashamed; the carvings on the walls, like chained dreams, stared meaningless in the light, as they would fain hide themselves.
I looked at the image on the altar. I saw it smiling and alive with the living touch of God. The night I had imprisoned spread its wings and vanished."[1]

The closed temple, I believe, is a true image of the spiritual life of India, if not at all times, at any rate for many centuries previous to the advent of the English. Everything seems to point to this—the symbolic character of Indian art; the absence of history and the prevalence of religious legend; the cult of the fakir and the wandering ascetic. In India one feels religion as one feels it nowhere else, unless it were in Russia. But the religion one feels is peculiar. It is the religion that denies the value of experience in Time. It is the religion of the Eternal.

But, it will be urged, how can that be, when India continues to produce her teeming millions; when these perforce live their brief lives in a constant and often vain struggle for a bare livelihood; when, in order to

[1] *The Gardener*, p. 125.

live at all, it is necessary at every point to be straining vitality in the pursuit of temporal goods or the avoidance of temporal evils?

I make no attempt to disguise or to weaken this paradox. But I suggest that it is but one of the many paradoxes set up by the conflict between men's instinct for life and their conscious beliefs. Indians live not because they believe in life, but because they cannot help it. Their hold on life is certainly less than that of Western men. Thus I have been told by administrators of famine relief or of precautions against plague, that what they have to contend with is not so much the resistance as the indifference of the population. "Why worry us?" they say, in effect; "life is not worth the trouble. Let us die and be rid of it." Life is an evil, that is the root feeling of India; and the escape is either, for the mass, by death; or for the men of spiritual genius, by a flight to the Eternal. How this attitude has arisen I do not here seek to determine; race, climate, social and political conditions, all no doubt have played their part. The spiritual attitude is probably an effect, rather than a cause, of an enfeebled grip on life. But no one, I think, who knows India, would dispute that this attitude is a fact; and it is a fact that distinguishes India not only from the West but from the Far East.

For China and Japan, though they have had, and to a less extent still have, religion, are not, in the Indian sense, religious. The Chinese, in particular, strike one

as secular and practical; quite as secular and practical as the English. They have had Buddhism, as we have had Christianity; but no one who can perceive and understand would say that their outlook is determined by Buddhism, any more than ours is by Christianity. It is Confucianism that expresses the Chinese attitude to life, whenever the Chinese soul, becoming aware of itself, looks out from the forest of animistic beliefs in which the mass of the people wander. And Confucianism is perhaps the best and purest expression of the practical reason that has ever been formulated. Family-duty, social duty, political duty, these are the things on which it lays stress. And when the Chinese spirit seeks escape from these primary preoccupations, it finds its freedom in an art that is closer to the world of fact, imaginatively conceived, than that of any other race. Chinese art purifies itself from symbolism to become interpretation; whereas in India the ocean of symbolism never ceases to roll over the drowning surface of the phenomenal world. Chinese literature, again, has this same hold upon life. It is such as Romans or Englishmen, if equally gifted, might have written. Much of it, indeed, is stupidly and tediously didactic. But where it escapes into poetry it is a poetry like Wordsworth's, revealing the beauty of actual things, rather than weaving across them an embroidery of subjective emotions The outlook of China is essentially the outlook of the West, only more sane, more

reasonable, more leisured and dignified. Positivism and Humanity, the dominant forms of thought and feeling in the West, have controlled Chinese civilisation for centuries. The Chinese have built differently from ourselves and on a smaller scale, with less violence and less power; but they have built on the same foundations.

And Japan, too, at bottom is secular. Her true religion is that of the Emperor and his divine ancestors. Her strongest passion is patriotism. A Japanese, like an Indian, is always ready to die. But he dies for the splendours and glories of this world of sense. It is not because he has so little hold on life, but because he has so much, that he so readily throws it away. The Japanese are unlike the Chinese and unlike the Europeans and Americans; but their outlook is similar. They believe in the world of time and change; and because of this attitude, they and the rest of the world stand together like a mountain in the sun, contemplating uneasily that other mysterious peak, shrouded in mist, which is India.

The reader by this time will have grasped the point I am trying to put. There are in Man two religious impulses, or, if the expression be preferred, two aspects of the religious impulse. I have called them the religion of the Eternal and the religion of Time; and India I suggest stands pre-eminently for the one, the West for the other, while the other countries of the East rank

rather with the West than with India. It is not necessary to my purpose to exaggerate this antithesis. I will say, if it be preferred, that in India the emphasis is on the Eternal, in the West on Time. But that much at least must be said and is plainly true. Now, as between these two attitudes, I find myself quite clearly and definitely on the side of the West. I have said in the preceding pages hard things about Western civilisation. I hate many of its manifestations, I am out of sympathy with many of its purposes. I can see no point, for instance, in the discovery of the north or the south pole, and very little in the invention of aeroplanes; while gramophones, machine guns, advertisements, cinematographs, submarines, dreadnoughts, cosmopolitan hotels, seem to me merely fatuous or sheerly disastrous. But what lies behind all this, the tenacity, the courage, the spirit of adventure, this it is that is the great contribution of the West. It is not the aeroplane that is valuable; probably it will never be anything but pernicious, for its main use is likely to be for war. But the fact that men so lightly risk their lives to perfect it, *that* is valuable. The West is adventurous; and, what is more, it is adventurous on a quest. For behind and beyond all its fatuities, confusions, crimes, lies, as the justification of it all, that deep determination to secure a society more just and more humane which inspires all men and all movements that are worth considering at all, and, to those

who can understand, gives greatness and significance even to some of our most reckless enterprises. We are living very "dangerously"; all the forces are loose, those of destruction as well as those of creation; but we are living towards something; we are living with the religion of Time.

So far, I daresay, most Western men will agree with me in the main. But they may say, some of them, as the Indian will certainly say, "Is that all? Have you no place for the Eternal and the Infinite?" To this I must reply that I think it clear and indisputable that the religion of the Eternal, as interpreted by Sri Ramakrishna, is altogether incompatible with the religion of Time. And the position of Sri Ramakrishna, I have urged, is that of most Indian, and as I think, of most Western mystics. Not, however, of all, and not of all modern mystics, even in India. Rabindranath Tagore, for example, in his "Sádhana," has put forward a mysticism which does, at least, endeavour to allow for and include what I have called the religion of Time. To him, and to other mystics of real experience, I must leave the attempt to reconcile Eternity and Time. For my own part, I can only approach the question from the point of view of Time, and endeavour to discover and realise the most that can be truly said by one who starts with the belief that that is real. The profoundest prophets of the religion of Time are, in my judgment, Goethe and George Meredith; and from them, and from

others, and from my own small experience, I seem to have learned this: the importance of that process in Time in whose reality we believe does not lie merely in the bettering of the material and social environment, though we hold the importance of that to be great; it lies in the development of souls. And that development consists in a constant expansion of interest away from and beyond one's own immediate interests out into the activities of the world at large. Such expansion may be pursued in practical life, in art, in science, in contemplation, so long as the contemplation is of the real processes of the real world in time. To that expansion I see no limit except death. And I do not know what comes after death. But I am clear that whatever comes after, the command of Life is the same—to expand out of oneself into the life of the world. This command—I should rather say this impulse—seems to me absolute, the one certain thing on which everything else must build. I think it enough for religion, in the case at least of those who have got beyond the infant need for certitudes and dogmas. These perhaps are few; yet they may be really more numerous than appears. And on the increase in their numbers, and the intensity of their conviction and their life, the fate of the world seems to me to depend.

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